REPORT RESUMES

ED 014 004 24 AA 000 272
SOCIAL SCIENCE EDUCATION CONSORTIUM. PUBLICATION 122,
MORALITY.
BY- SCRIVEN, MICHAEL
PURDUE UNIV., LAFAYETTE, IND.
REPORT NUMBER SSEC-PUB-122 PUB DATE MAR 66
REPORT NUMBER BR-5-0619-PUB-122
EDRS PRICE MF-~~$0.50~~ HC-~~$5.00~~ ~~123P.~~
75 6.28 157

DESCRIPTORS- *SOCIAL SCIENCES, *MORAL VALUES, *MORAL ISSUES, *EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS, PUBLIC SCHOOLS, *ETHICAL VALUES, POLITICAL ISSUES, *SOCIAL VALUES, SOCIAL SCIENCE EDUCATION CONSORTIUM

THIS POSITION PAPER PRESENTS AN APPROACH TO THE VERY DIFFICULT PROBLEM OF HANDLING VALUES IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS, PARTICULARLY IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS. IT DISCUSSES THE FOUNDATIONS OF ETHICS AND THE METHODOLOGICAL BASIS FOR MORAL VALUE JUDGMENTS. THE DISCUSSIONS ARE PRESENTED UNDER THREE GENERAL TOPIC AREAS--(1) "PRELIMINARIES" WHICH COVERS THE PROBLEMS, CONCLUSIONS, MORALITY DISTINGUISHED FROM PRUDENCE, UNSOUND BASES FOR MORALITY, MORAL DISAGREEMENT VERSUS MORAL SKEPTICISM, UNSELFISH BEHAVIOR, PLEASURE OR HAPPINESS, AND THE PARADOX OF JUSTIFYING MORALITY, (2) "BASIC CASE OF MORALITY" WHICH INCLUDES AN EXAMPLE (ARMY DISCIPLINE), A DEFINITION OF THE MORAL COMMUNITY, THE EXPECTANCY ADVANTAGE FOR THE MORAL COMMUNITY, THE PRODUCTIVITY ADVANTAGE FOR THE MORAL COMMUNITY, THE ADAPTABILITY ADVANTAGE FOR THE MORAL COMMUNITY, AND THE MORAL COMPROMISE, AND (3) "CRITICISMS AND REFINEMENTS" WHICH INCLUDES ATTITUDE INERTIA AND SELF-SACRIFICE, ATTITUDE INERTIA AND SOME MORAL PUZZLE-CASES, EVOLUTIONARY ETHICS, FORMULATION AND INTERPRETATION OF MORAL MAXIMS, THE MORAL FRANCHISE, ATTITUDE CONTROL, PARADOXES OF COMMITMENT, AND CONCLUSIONS. TWO OTHER POSITION PAPERS ARE INCLUDED IN THE SERIES--(1) "VALUE CLAIMS IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES" (AA 000 273) AND (2) "STUDENT VALUES AS EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES" (AA 000 274). THIS PAPER WAS WRITTEN AS PART OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCE EDUCATION CONSORTIUM, A CURRICULUM PROJECT DESIGNED TO OUTLINE THE CONCEPTS, METHODS, AND STRUCTURE OF SEVERAL OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES FOR USE BY TEACHERS AND CURRICULUM WORKERS AT ALL GRADE LEVELS. (RS)

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MORALITY

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Publication #122 of the
Social Science Education Consortium

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The research reported herein was performed pursuant to a contract with the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Education, under the provisions of the Cooperative Research Program.

FOREWORD

The research for, and writing of, this paper was supported in part by a contract of the United States Office of Education with Purdue University for the Social Science Education Consortium.

This paper is one of several done under this contract, which develop a particular approach to the very difficult problem of handling values in the educational process, and particularly in the public schools. It is a position paper on the foundations of ethics and the methodological basis for moral value judgments. A second paper, "Value Claims in the Social Sciences", brings that position to bear on value issues in the social sciences. A third paper, "Student Values as Educational Objectives", deals with the role of values in the curriculum. Further work is planned on specific methods of handling values in the curriculum and in the classroom.

This paper will appear as a chapter in Michael Scriven, Primary Philosophy (McGraw-Hill, 1966).

The author wishes to express his thanks to Richard Brandt, Paul Dietl, Kurt Baier, G. H. von Wright, and G. Barnes for their comments on drafts of this paper.

Michael Scriven

March, 1966

MORALITY

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MORALITY

Preliminaries

0. The Problems

Are moral judgements any more than an expression of the attitudes we acquire from the society in which we live? Are they not, therefore, highly relative and subjective--not objective claims at all, but just sales talk in Sunday dress? Why should one bother with so-called 'moral' considerations except where they overlap with selfish ones? In particular, how could real self-sacrifice ever be sensible? How do you define 'good'? or 'ought'?--isn't it impossible to do this except by using other moral terms, which makes the definition circular? Shouldn't enlightened self-interest (or perhaps pleasure-seeking, or perhaps self-realization) be the ultimate foundation of morality? Should your conscience be your guide? Are there any exceptions to the Golden Rule? How should one interpret Thou shalt not kill?--to mean that killing is always wrong, or usually wrong, or wrong unless proved otherwise? To whom, or to what, do moral standards apply; to infants, morons, animals, nations, robots? Is it realistic to suppose that we shall ever get agreement on moral issues, and if not, isn't that good grounds for practical scepticism about the existence of absolute moral standards? Is there some kind of ultimate distinction between facts and values? Isn't religion the only possible basis for a morality that will work in this imperfect world? Should we praise people for effort or for achievement--if a saint finds it easy to behave morally doesn't that show he's not so deserving as if it were very hard for him? Is it someone's motives that determine whether his actions are virtuous, or is it the consequences of the actions?

1. The Conclusions

If we indicate the general nature of the proposed conclusions at the beginning of this chapter, the reader will more easily detect irrelevancy and impropriety in the ensuing arguments, since he will know what it is supposed to achieve. With the arguments of this chapter, such assistance is almost essential, for they are themselves complicated and their connections and assumptions are not easily stated. In fact, the only way to get a precise understanding of the conclusions is from a careful study of the course of the arguments. But we can begin with an approximation.

Roughly, then, it will be argued that there is a particular conception of morality which can be shown to be an extension of rationality. This conception is relevant to many decisions about actions and attitudes that affect more than one person, and where it is relevant we shall see that immorality can be said to be irrational. This does not mean that any immoral act by any person is irrational in terms of that person's current goals; it means that having moral goals is rationally preferable to not having them.

Compare the question, Why be moral? with, Why use statistics? As a first answer to both questions it might be said that morality and statistics are extensions of reason and hence have all the sanctions of reason in the circumstances appropriate for their use. To the follow-up question; When shouldn't you be acting morally/(using statistics)? we would, prosaically, answer, (a) When it's irrelevant to what you're doing

(b) When it's relevant, but you aren't sufficiently well trained to be able to benefit from its advantages. Specifically; statistics isn't relevant when you're not trying to analyze complex data and morality isn't relevant when you are analyzing situations which are only of concern to yourself.* But if you're ever likely to be in the other kind of case, it is rational to train yourself (or get yourself trained) to the point where doing statistical analysis/(acting morally) comes naturally. One can't immediately blame a man who doesn't know statistics/(lacks moral feelings) for not using statistics/(acting morally); but one can sometimes blame him for his lack.

So the general line of argument will be that rational but non-moral evaluation of different possible attitudes toward other people indicates the superiority of the attitude of regarding them as deserving equal consideration (which we shall identify as the moral attitude). For people in different circumstances, the argument has different forces. With regard to the children we are now bringing up it clearly indicates a particular way to do this; for a selfish but highly successful middleaged man it has less impact; for a government official it fully reinforces the ideology of his profession, etc. So, in the sense that there are good reasons, from his point of view, for a drug addict to take drugs, there can be good reasons for an immoral man to murder for gain. But this in no way shows that taking drugs or murder for gain is in itself rational, for it is not rational to allow oneself to become an addict or an immoralist. In the dominant sense, therefore, addiction and immorality are (typically) irrational.

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*This is true in the core conception of morality, with whose defense we are concerned. Mild extensions of it, to include the conception of 'moral fibre' (i.e., strength of character), duties to oneself, etc., are plausibly defensible.

The moral society is a far greater advance on the pre-moral, in practical terms (e.g., likelihood of survival) than the industrial on the nomadic; but the moral revolution requires us to pull ourselves up by our bootstraps with a different twist, for the maximum gain in this case is for those with, individually, the least material power.* Democracy is almost a precondition of the moral revolt, but no guarantee, for a democracy whose culture has led it to place a very high value on bread and circuses, or beer and television, will not have much interest in pulling at its bootstraps.

Some of the other conclusions to be drawn can be indicated briefly. Our natural wants and needs, (a motley crew, not consisting of pleasure in many guises) like our beliefs and attitudes are not automatically or intrinsically good, but simply a starting-point from which we discover that the most efficient way to resolve disputes and improve the expectations of each of us requires the adoption and enforcement of some rules about distribution, obligation, etc. The concepts of moral goodness, rightness, etc., apply within this system of rules in precisely the way that non-moral concepts of goodness and rightness apply in the system of rules we develop for strategy in war, mathematics or consumer research. In terms of these rules we may have to modify or condemn some of the wants from which we start; so the premoral springs of morality eventually become an object for moral assessment. Thus emerges the acclaim for unselfishness and the condemnation of sadism.

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*The significance of this difference in the driving force for moral rather than industrial progress becomes clear if one recalls that the basic insight into morality was certainly formulated 250 years ago (in Richard Cumberland's De Legibus Naturae), if not 2000 years earlier, in Plato, since which time we have created virtually the whole structure of modern science, transformed Terran technology, made a fair start on colonization of the Moon and de-colonization of the Earth. The charms of morality are more subtle than the delights of power.

In a complex system of this kind it is as hopeless to produce brief non-trivial definitions of "good," "duty," etc., as it is to attempt the corresponding task in chess or bridge with regard to "good move"; but the system is clearly founded on non-moral facts and evolves morality from them by the application of reason. Thus the ultimate appeal is to an objective truth, and not to our beliefs about it; so conscience is only a secondary guide and consequently we may be blamed for possessing an inadequate conscience. Formally, the system is best construed as containing one basic moral principle, the principle of equal consideration, from which all other moral principles (justice, etc.) can be developed; the principle itself being justified in terms of a comparative evaluation of the possible alternatives and their effects on a society which embraces them. This moral axiom can be interpreted in two ways, yielding what can be termed strong and weak morality. Weak morality involved the recognition of the rights of others but no positive interest in furthering their welfare; strong morality involves identification with the interests of others. The first is the domain of obligation, the second of supererogation; the first of honor and decency, the second of nobility, love and heroism. We shall be especially concerned with the justification of strong morality, the more difficult task.

The objectivity of moral judgements, in terms of the system just described, is exactly that of any very complex solution of an important practical or theoretical problem; emotions are more involved than in most practical problems, but the total authority of facts and reason applies and we fail if we fight it.

The chapter first discusses some simple difficulties (Sections 2-7), then turns to the main arguments for morality (Sections 8-12) and finally considers a series of refinements and more serious difficulties in the light of the developed argument.

2. Morality Distinguished from Prudence

The most striking feature that distinguishes what we usually call moral principles from mere good advice is that they are supposed to be obeyed even when obedience does not seem to be in one's own best interest. That is, they supervene over and may contradict self-interest. Obviously, stealing is foolish if one is likely to be caught; this is not a moral conclusion and in such circumstances there is no great virtue in not stealing. But if you are justifiably certain of getting away with a theft, and the gains are very large and your need very great, your own interests appear to conflict with the recommendation of morality. We shall confine our attention to the questions whether, in what sense, how, and which rules of this kind can be justified. One may use the term "morality" to cover any system of 'rules to live by,' including purely selfish ones and ones that are entirely relativistic, but the usual systems embody the above feature of potential clash with self-interest, and they also share a number of common principles (such as injunctions on stealing, lying and killing) so it is of particular interest to investigate the possibility of supporting a system of this family. It will be argued here that just one system of this kind can be given direct rational support, and that all others of this kind, as well as egocentric or relativistic 'morality' are insupportable. Hence the terms "moral" and "ethical" (which are synonymous in most contexts) and their associates will here usually refer to the allegedly defensible system we shall try to construct; but sometimes, where the context makes it clear, it will refer to all systems of rules governing behavior which have been put forward as moralities.

3. Unsound Bases for Morality

The author has presented elsewhere the argument that morality cannot be ultimately founded on the ordinances of a God, because the existence of God cannot be demonstrated; and, even if it could be, we would still need independent standards of morality by which to tell if God is good. For, if the standards are not independent, it is only a definitional truth that He is good, and it cannot then be a definitional truth that we should do what is good, since neither definition implies the other. In fact we have to choose between the two definitions; and one choice leads to a secular morality, the other to a pointless one. (The argument here follows the lines of the criticism of the ontological argument where its proponents attempt to ensure that God is perfect by definition and also that he exists by definition. The only cake one can eat and have is imaginary.)

It is also quite clear that no appeal to conscience can be a workable foundation for an objective morality since (a) consciences are inconsistent (those of different persons and even that of the same person) and if support by conscience was the ultimate basis for morality, both views would be equally true, i.e., there would be no objective moral truth; and (b) even if everyone's conscience was always in agreement, this would not rule out the possibility that all were in error. The conscience is the name of our moral sense, but like all other senses, it can surely be mistaken, and the crucial question is how we decide whether it is. That question obviously calls for standards of morality that are not conscience-controlled.

Thus there remain to be considered only the ways of sugar-coating the pill if morality cannot be justified, and the possibility of a general justification--i.e., one that will be relevant to anyone, no matter what his interests are.

After considering some preliminary difficulties, we shall embark on the attempt at such a universal justification.

4. Does Moral Disagreement Support Moral Scepticism?

However one attempts to justify morality, the morality itself is a subject of the utmost complexity. Certainly a rational morality will involve almost every factual difficulty connected with discovering the facts about human behavior, plus the difficulty of avoiding emotional bias in an area where almost every such bias is most powerful, plus the difficulty of combining the facts objectively in the moral apparatus. These difficulties have made it plausible to claim that objective justification of moral claims is impossible.

Since ethics is a field in which emotions are very close to the surface, it is hardly surprising the moral claims are frequently based on one's wish to defend one's actions or intentions rather than on pure reason. No one enjoys the sanctions of disapproval or punishment, or the admission of error. With issues of this kind the difficulty of reaching general agreement is no more a proof of the absence of objective standards than is the difficulty of getting the litigants in a breach-of-promise suit to agree on the facts, a proof that there were no facts. The fact that ethical disputes often involve extremely complicated and subtle reasoning, and difficult judgements of fact (e.g., long-range predictions about consequences) provides independent grounds for expecting trouble. In these respects ethical disputes precisely resemble many disputes amongst established scientists about abstract theoretical matters, such as the interpretation of quantum theory or the utility of phenomenological psychology. Thus, although it will be concluded that there are absolute standards in morals in a way lacking in art, this does not mean that a correct single answer to every moral question is now or will on some date be known. The important conclusion is that the correct answers to some moral questions are now known or discoverable, the correct way to discover the answers to others can be indicated, and the correct interim moral attitude or actions can be determined.

5. Is Unselfish Behavior Possible?

Before showing that unselfish behavior is rationally defensible, it is important to define it and discuss the view that such behavior is impossible.

We each have certain interests, wants, needs or desires that do not concern other people directly, such as the desire for food, an interest in old clocks or the stock market. We may also have certain interests in the welfare or downfall of other people, such as our children, the President, our parents, certain Hollywood or sports celebrities, and our business partners. Some of this interest in other people's welfare simply arises from interests of the first kind. Replacing a President or partner satisfactorily would be time consuming and costly, if possible at all;

hence it is better for you if he stays alive and well; so you prefer him to take a break when he feels he needs it rather than have a breakdown. But it is commonly the case that, for whatever reason you first come to value another person, the other person often becomes of some intrinsic value to you (similarly for the opposite feelings). This means that even when there is no prospect of personal gain with respect to your _other_ interests, you are willing to make an effort to further his welfare. This is the mark of what we call 'genuine affection' for them; and it is the sign that, to some degree, and in some direction, you are unselfish.

People have sometimes argued that this is not truly unselfish because in these cases we are still gratifying ourselves, albeit by doing something for other people. But this view confuses "self-motivation" with "selfish motivation." There _is_ a sense in which every voluntary act is intended to be self-gratifying; it involves doing something in order to achieve one's own goals, i.e., is done from one's own motives. It does not follow from this sense that the act is selfish, i.e., that it involves disregard for the welfare of others, except insofar as that welfare contributes to one's interests. The unselfish interest in another is one of a man's _own_ interests, but not one of his selfish interests. The moral significance of unselfish behavior is that it helps others 'for their own sake,' implying 'not for what they or others will do in return'; it is not made less moral by the fact that it gives satisfaction to the doer.

6. _Is Pleasure--or Happiness--the Only Goal_?

A very similar argument to the above has been thought to show that all actions are motivated by considerations of pleasure. This conclusion (hedonism) can be combined with the earlier one (egoism). Everything we do, the argument runs, is done in order to achieve some end we think desirable. Achieving such an end would surely give us pleasure; hence everything we do is aimed at the goal of pleasure.

The natural reply would seem to be that we sometimes do things because we think we should or must--or because we cannot find the will-power to do otherwise--even when it gives us no pleasure, indeed the reverse. The call of duty, prudence, or compulsion is often not the call to pleasure. In replying to this, the hedonist might first wish to restrict himself to voluntary action and hence exclude complusive and compelled behavior. Then, he might say, we must recognize that the holy man's pleasure is the common man's poison; the duty-minded man says it isn't a pleasure to do his duty, meaning it isn't the kind of thing that people usually call a pleasure, but in fact it is simply an example of his peculiar taste in pleasures. For he cannot deny that he does his duty because he values the discharge of duty, and surely achieving a valued goal is rewarding, i.e., pleasurable or at least more pleasurable than the alternatives? The tangle of jargon here obscures the fallacy, which is simply to confuse doing something because one thinks it the best thing to do (and possibly continuing to feel thereafter that it was the best thing to do, from which fact one sometimes derives some satisfaction), with doing something simply because of the pleasure it will give us.

The human animal, like the dog, can learn or be trained to regard the welfare of other humans--or sheep--as a goal, and it can similarly acquire an interest in duty at some expense in felt pleasure. Only if we trivially extend the notion of pleasure to cover the condition resulting from doing anything a human ever voluntarily does, will doing one's duty always be enjoyable. Mostly, it's pretty painful. The hedonist claim is thus clearly false if the terms are used in the normal way. One *can* be mistaken about one's own motives but one can hardly be *always* sceptical about the possiblilty of distaste for and sadness after severely punishing a child or pet of whom one is fond, or of a judge passing a mandatory death sentence when he believes the death penalty is indefensible, or about the pain under torture which fails to make one reveal collaborators in a patriotic revolt.

So it is false, as a simple matter of fact, that all one's actions bring one more pleasure than the alternatives, even when they bring one exactly what one expected. Hence one does not always act solely or mainly to bring pleasure to oneself.

Even if it were true that one always feels *some* expected satisfaction or pleasure after all one's voluntary acts, as indeed one does after many, it would not be true that one always does them *for the sake* of that pleasure, or even *partly* for this reason. It is sometimes said that one can always derive a little satisfaction from the fact that justice is done, even when it is clear that what is done is on balance extremely distasteful, perhaps nauseating, as was foreseen (Billy Budd). But this prospective justification is not what leads one to the action; the motive is simply the urge to do what is right. This is not an incidental aim, a stop on the way to obtain a satisfaction, as buying a ticket to an opera is an incidental aim on the way to obtaining the satisfactions of attending the opera. The 'pleasure' (a grotesquely distorting term for this kind of satisfaction, at best) may not be the real motive at all, although it is foreseeable and occurs. To give another simple example, a good marksman generally obtains satisfaction from pulling off a very difficult shot, but there will be times when this is in no way part of his motive for making the shot. For example, he may be shooting at an enemy sniper with his last round.

A more complex point can be illustrated using the last example. It is not even correct to argue that he will even obtain his satisfaction in all cases; suppose he pulls off a very difficult long range shot when on a deer drive but as the bullet strikes home the target spins around and is seen to be the hunter's best friend. Does the hunter feel a tiny glow of satisfaction which is outshone by the brighter light of grief? No; he feels no satisfaction and only sorrow. So (a) success does not always bring the satisfactions of success; and (b) the satisfactions of success are not always our reasons for attempting a task at which success might in other circumstances be very satisfying.

Finally, even if pleasure was always the chief outcome, and even if that pleasure was in a straightforward sense the purpose of our actions, we could not conclude that pleasure is the goal of life in the sense the hedonist suggests. For just as rationality cannot be the only goal a man has (Knowledge Chapter), neither can pleasure; pleasure has to be in something, it must arise from doing, possessing, admiring, reflecting on or striving for something. If what we strive for is good and noble, the satisfaction we may obtain from the struggle in no way degrades our action from nobility to hedonism. Since we also have seen that goals may be goals for other reasons than the pleasurable consequences their attainment provides, we can conclude that maximizing pleasure is neither a necessary nor a sufficient account of human motivation.

7. The Paradox of Justifying Morality

Religious people have long stressed that being moral to escape the wrath of God or to enter Paradise is not being moral in the crucial sense, for it is simply exhibiting prudent self-interest. It is sometimes said that we should be moral from love of God, not from fear of Him or from hope for His rewards. If this is our motivation, it is said that we are then being truly moral. But there are difficulties.

One might put the difficulty in this way. Why is love of God thought by theologians to be a better motive than love of Paradise, or fear of hellfire? It is commonly because love of God is not selfish like love of ease and avoidance of discomfort. But even though this makes it a better motive than some others, it does not make it a good motive, for unselfish love of a non-existent entity or of an existent but evil one are both undesirable. Hence this chain of justification requires the extra step of establishing God's existence and goodness on non-theistic grounds. Such an extra step is impossible because of the failure of natural theology, not because it requires a definitionally impossible task.

But the rational man appears to face an even more acute difficulty. If a rational justification of morality is to be given, it apparently must show that unselfishness is a rationally superior pattern of behavior by comparison with selfishness. That is, it must show that a selfish man has good reasons for being unselfish--if he can by choice--for else it preaches only to the converted. But the only reasons that are good reasons for a selfish man are, it would seem, selfish reasons, i.e., reasons that relate to his own--selfish--interests. So it appears we are faced with the task of giving selfish reasons for being unselfish--which is surely a plain contradiction. Thus it appears that the very attempt to give a universally valid rational justification of morality must fail. Indeed, even if it succeeded, it would in doing so surely fail, since it would have demonstrated that unselfish behavior is really in the best interests of a selfish person, i.e., is not really unselfish. So a dilemma appears to threaten the very possibility of success, before any substantial move has been made. It is a false dilemma. For it proves possible to show that reasons can be given to a selfish man that show it is in his interest to abandon the selfish point of view in favor of an unselfish one, just because this is not the same as giving a selfish man reasons for here-and-now acting unselfishly. In order to build up the case, it is essential to relate it to the arguments for the advantage of a system of morality for a group.

The Basic Case for Morality

8. An Illustrative Example: Army Discipline

A citizen is about to be conscripted into the armed forces of his country which is at war. He realizes that the military training which he will undergo is designed to make him obey orders instinctively, regardless of personal cost or judgment. In particular cases, this will undoubtedly mean that he will have to do things which are not in his own best selfish interests at the time, indeed may cause his death. And there will probably be cases where he will have to enforce orders from above on others, contrary to his rational judgment of the best way to employ or expend them. Sometimes his own view will be right and lives will be lost unnecessarily. Now a thoughtful man realizes that there are excellent reasons for this kind of training, even though the power it gives officers is sometimes misused or unluckily employed. Not only is a democratic procedure unworkable at the field unit level because of the delay involved in discussion and voting, it is sometimes intrinsically deficient. For sometimes the armed forces as a whole can triumph--and the country survive--only if some parts of them can be expended, without a chance of survival, to save more crucial parts or to obtain a crucial advantage. Now the doomed elements would normally lack any rational selfish grounds for agreeing to such a sacrifice. Men being what they are, i.e., fairly selfish, this means the maneuver would often not be agreed on by the field units required to sacrifice themselves. So the war would be lost because absolute power had not been accorded to the general staff. This power is most effectively developed by training subordinates to almsot unconditional obedience--and to unconditional commitment to victory.

For the citizen about to be conscripted, it is clear that his own advantage is served by the fact that the forces are run in this way. His own chances of survival are increased by the efficiency of a disciplined army, and so, of course, are those of his country (and hence his family) as well. He has good reasons to vote for army discipline if it ever became an issue at the polls, even though he knows it has potential risks for himself as a possible draftee. Ideally, perhaps, he would like to have everyone else conditioned but not himself; but that option is not open to him, indeed it is entirely clear to him that the army should be run in such a way as to preclude anyone from avoiding conditioning. By participating, even on the less-than-selfishly idea terms that are available, he definitely adds to the total power of the army and hence to the probability of victory, and the alternatives of draft-dodging or desertion are, of course, considerably less attractive. So there are certainly circumstances in which there are expectations of selfish advantage to be gained by submitting to training that may condition one to sacrifice one's life on command. It is, of course, important that the expectations of this happening be more-or-less evenly spread and tied to emergency conditions. Volunteering for a kamikaze squadron on the day you enlist is hardly a rationally defensible act for a selfish man. But notice that it may be defensible for him to undertake training which sometimes does lead to such patriotic inspiration and valor as to significantly increase the probability of volunteering for highly hazardous duties. For it is a great advantage to the force to have such men available and to his advantage that the force have advantages. Of course, if the increased likelihood of death outweighs the disadvantages of any alternative open to him, then he is no longer rational to undergo the training.

It must be stressed that the discipline system reaps its benefits just insofar as the training is effective. If the training only gets the trainees to the point where they obey orders on the parade ground or when an armed officer is behind them, but not to the point of acceptance of the value of obeying an order just because it is an order, or of victory even when one risks death to bring it nearer, then it will lose some of its largest advantages. The occasions when most is to be gained by the country are often those when most is to be lost by the heroes. On the other hand, the system is not dependent for all gains on absolute obedience by everyone; it shows important profits even with some obedience by some.

Now obeying orders in an army at war is not the same as acting morally, but it is closely related, and the example is instructive in many ways. In particular, it illustrates the sense in which a system can increase each citizen's chances of survival by conditioning each citizen to regard survival as less important than obedience to orders. Similarly, in the usual circumstances of society, each citizen's chances of a satisfying life for himself are increased by a process of conditioning all not to treat his own satisfaction as the most important total. Specifically, a system which inculcates genuine concern for the welfare of others is, it will be argued, the most effective system for increasing the welfare of each individual. Put paradoxically, there are circumstances in which one can give a selfish justification for unselfishness.

There are other reasons for this conclusion, and ways of widening the range of circumstances in which it applies. These will be developed in later sections. In discussing each advantage we shall first examine the benefits for the group and then see how these bear on the decisions of the individual in special circumstances, e.g., when groups of this kind exist only imperfectly or not at all, or when they can be joined under false pretences. For the great difficulty in the justification of morality is the transition from arguments for the group's advantage to arguments for the individual's advantage in following the moral path.

9. The Moral Community--Definition

We have so far argued for the possibility of unselfish behavior and for the key role of such behavior in the traditional moralities. This element of concern for others is one of the main distinguishing features of a moral system by contrast with a system of conventions or manners, which refer to the form rather than the motivation of behavior. It is also of great importance that the moral code is the dominant one, and any justification of morality must justify its claim to priority over matters of manners, codes of honor, traditions and laws. We shall now propose a general principle which has unselfish behavior as one consequence, and which we shall regard as the defining principle and basic axiom of a moral system. This principle may be taken to define morality because (a) it generates a system of rules which substantially overlaps and is elsewhere extremely close to the common element in what have traditionally been called moral systems, and it generates a moral conclusion on most issues that have traditionally been regarded as moral, (b) it can be given a rational justification, whereas none of the alternatives can, and hence it deserves the title of morality in the same way that the currently best supported views about the empirical world deserve to be referred to as "science" and their contraries as "unscientific," whatever their popular support in the past or present. The first consideration justifies calling it a moral system, and the second justifies calling it the moral system, or just morality.

We shall call a community (or an attitude, system of laws, etc.) moral insofar as it accepts the principle that every person has equal rights (and the rational conclusions from this and the relevant facts.) To "have equal rights" is to have an equal claim to consideration: and a society with this commitment can only justify divergencies of actual consideration where these can be shown to be required in order better to serve the claims of all. This apparently paradoxical notion is best explained by exhibiting practical examples. It may, for example, be thought of in terms of an analogy with the voting rights of the legal partners in a corporation. These are basically equal right, and are inalienable in that they cannot be bought and sold as such--they must always be exercised by the partner to whom they belong. But of course, he may make an informal agreement (it cannot be a legal one) to vote the way one of the others--or some outsider--indicates; and he may do this for profit or from persuasion that it is the best course of action. Again, he may acquire debts or credits in outside life that affect his voting decisions--for example, he may now decide to, or have to, vote for quick profits or long gains. And he may act illegally in previously mentioned or other ways and thus render his rights forfeit. Obviously his voting behavior can be assessed in two ways; (a) as sensible or not in the light of his personal commitments, and (b) as in the interests of the corporation. In particular, we might say that he has the right to vote on the decision whether to install a new type of generating plant in one of the factories, but it would not be sensible for him to exercise that right since he has none of the relevant technical knowledge. Indeed, in cases like this, it would be perfectly sensible for all the partners to vote in advance that such an issue be decided by a sub-committee of the experts among the partners or even by outside consultants. About this decision, then, a partner not on that sub-committee would not carry equal weight. But there were good reasons for him to give up his immediate power on that issue and--the key point--in making the decision to set up the arrangement which restricted his power, his vote did carry equal weight. "Equal rights" means fundamentally or untimately equal consideration, not equal consideration on specific issues where there are good reasons for all to adopt a procedure which takes more account in the immedicate case of some people's views than others. ('Town meeting democracy' is by no means intrinsically preferable to 'representative democracy.') The question is always whether the reasons for according unequal consideration on a particular occasion are derived from principles which accord equal benefits (like "let the decision be made by those with the relevant knowledge").*

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*Strictly speaking, one should say that everyone does receive equal consideration in these situations, but not equal treatment; for these are cases where the good of all is best served by differential concern with their opinions about the immediate course of action.

The President of the United States has a large secretarial staff, body guard and salary for which all adult residents in the U. S. pay. This is unequal treatment at first sight; we pay and he receives the benefit. But the staff is used to increase efficiency in handling issues which affect us all, to the long-run effect is beneficial to all. Consequently, this is not a case of inequity, i.e., unjust (morally indefensible) discrimination. Similar arguments apply to the body-guard and salary. This shows that not only the views but the welfare of one person might be given preference in a wholly moral society.

A Congressman has more say in law-making than a citizen--but efficiency in serving the needs of all requires a professional government. The universal franchise is the political embodiment of the equality of rights in a moral community, just as due process is part of the legal embodiment of this principle. As now practiced in the U. S., the franchise is by no means ideal, but, properly amended and enforced it may well be the best possible way to protect the moral rights of the individual concerned.** When the constitution of a country or an organization of countries talks about all people being equal, it does not imply they are equally strong, intelligent or virtuous and it does not imply that they should receive equal incomes; it simply means they have equal rights--i.e., they must be given equal consideration in the formulation and appli-

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**Some of the more notable deficiencies of law or practice involve the very poor, the colored, widely scattered minority groups, the disfranchisement--whole or partial--of residents of capital-states and cities, the young, ex-criminals, and the differential treatment of taxed permanent residents, natives of the territories, and citizens.

cation of the law of the land and the actions of its government and people. Nor does it necessitate that they be given equal votes, although any case to the contrary would have to be very strong to carry weight against popular demand for the vote. Indeed, the prima facie case for an effective equal vote is so strong that the axiom of equal rights, which we have taken to define morality, is often thought of as a definition of democracy. However, the two are equivalent only when a large number of conditions are met, including defensible franchise restrictions, adequate range of views amongst candidates, a certain level of intelligence and incorruptibility amongst the electorate and the representatives, and so on. The matter is further discussed in a later section.

Now what _are_ the advantages of a society committed to morality in the sense defined by the axiom of equal rights?

10. The Expectancy Advantage for the Moral Community

Consider two groups of people who are facing an occasionally hazardous environment. One is composed of rational selfish people (i.e., people who are more-or-less rational in all matters except for the fact of their selfishness, whose rationality is in doubt) the other of rational moral people, otherwise comparable in skills, intelligence, etc. We first consider only the expectation of life, which we assume everyone in the two groups values substantially. Morality implies the acceptance of the equality of everyone's right to life.

Morality does not imply that _whatever_ anyone wants, he has just as much right to it as anyone else does to whatever _he_ wants. For some people's wants are totally contrary to the moral axiom (e.g., the sadist who wants to hurt an unwilling victim) and in general such wants are given low or zero weight in the moral scale, particularly where such wants are under voluntary control or remediable (see below). We begin with a case which involves the right to life just because this must be granted, since it is the essential preliminary to all other wants and needs. It does not preclude the possibility that a man can forfeit this right under a defensible system of law (though attempts to defend such a system--discussed later--are commonly defective). For this reason, we might express the present principle more exactly by saying that everyone has a prima facie equal right to life, i.e., they have one unless it can be shown that they have forfeited it. To begin with we shall take the equality of the right to life to imply the simple majority self-sacrifice principle, which requires a moral agent to give up his own life if he can thereby save two or more others. We make the essential modifications to this principle later.

Exposing the two groups to the same hazards, possibly including war, famine, flood, fire, pestilence and the automobiles, we may expect that occasions will arise when the above principle has application. On each such occasion, at least one more life will be lost in the selfish group, since the selfish individual will choose to survive and in so doing will ensure the death of at least two others. It may be that on the average a thousand more lives will be lost--but at least one more will be.

There will thus be a substantial gain in the expectation of life for the average member of the moral group, and hence a considerable selfish advantage about joining it--assuming you have no guarantee that the hazards will pass you by--even though doing so requires that one be conditioned to accept the sacrifice of self when the need of others is greater.

It is true that there will be occasions in the selfish group when a man will be able to save his life where in the other group he would have to give it up. But these cases, which impinge so strongly on the selfish man's imagination as he contemplates the unselfish life, are completely swamped (at least two to one) by the cases where he will lose his life in the selfish group because someone else acts selfishly. A man's gain in expectation of life will be directly proportional to the frequency with which such situations involve him, and to the size of the average group saved (in proportion to the size of the whole group), and these factors will vary greatly from one environment to another, being very high in war and relatively low in a stable modern peacetime society.

We have so far considered a very crude case. In reality, the gains are enormously increased by (a) using a weighted rather than a simple majority self-sacrifice principle, that is, by taking account of the worth _to others_ of those at stake (and the worth of those others) and the worth to themselves of people in different states of life and health, (b) including cases where two people can save the lives of three, seven the lives of nine, etc., (c) extending the range of sacrifice to refer not only to life but to other values, and (d) taking account of the difference in the quality of the experience between the loss of life for a wholly selfish man, impotent to save himself, and that of a man who willingly lays his life down to save others. Moreover, the selfish group is far worse off than so far appears, for (e) a wider range of occasions will arise when it will cost one man not his life but only a little _effort_ to save the _lives_ of several others--and he will often not expend that effort.

It will be clear, then, that advantages akin to but greater than those with which a high level of discipline rewards an army may be expected by groups which practice self-sacrifice. And these advantages are in terms of whatever each of them individually desires, over a very wide range of such desires. Whatever a man may desire in life, life is always and health usually necessary to enjoy it, and expectations of just these are particularly well preserved and enlarged by the moral society.

It might be retorted that the selfish group is perfectly capable of seeing the point just made and will institute a set of rules and enforcing agencies to ensure that its members do not fiddle while their fellows burn. Such a move, while better than nothing, has four weaknesses compared with the situation in the moral group. The police are not always present, when present they may lack the necessary power, they are corruptible, and they are expensive. (And, morally, it involves a substantial risk in welfare or lives to the police themselves).

In fact, the police can hardly affect the primary case considered above since if the group which could make the sacrifice contains only one man he is either a policeman or not, and in neither case subject to immediate police pressure. So, in all the cases where reprisals for failing to perform the legally enjoined act of self-sacrifice are either unlikely (through ignorance, lack of evidence, incompetent use of it, bribery, rank-pulling, etc.) or less severe than the immediate sacrifice called for, the selfish man will not sacrifice himself and so the advantage still goes to the moral community. This is a large proportion of cases; and to it we must add the cases where reprisals seem unlikely or less important to the naturally biassed agent, and those where there is enough uncertainty about the combination of the likelihood of reprisals together with their size to make the selfish act the better choice. And there are other difficulties, to which we proceed.

11. The Productivity Advantage for the Moral Community

The classical economic argument for the 'division of labor,' i.e., specialization, is very simple. A skilled bricklayer can outperform an amateur by a quantitative factor of from five to twenty, apart from quality of work; the same amateur bricklayer might add figures as much faster than the bricklayer, and more accurately. As a bonus, people frequently prefer to do tasks which they do well or do better than others. An arrangement in which these and others can work at their specialty rather than at everything as they need it will multiply the group's output by a large factor and under typical conditions on the currency, mobility, stability, form of government, etc., these advantages may be expected to benefit everyone to a significant extent. Now one of the tasks we have to perform in a predatory but property-based society is that of guarding our property, our lives and our health. On the division of labor basis and for other reasons it will pay a rich man to hire guards or an army to do this, and in a wider range of circumstances, it will pay most of us to contribute small sums to a police force and perhaps also to an army. If, moreover, contributions are tailored to amount of property guarded, almost everyone will benefit.

To some extent a police force, and its administrative superstructure, underpinnings and correlatives in the judiciary, executive and legislative branches of the government, can enforce on a selfish person the practices to which a moral person is inclined, e.g., by requiring payment of graduated taxes, penalizing culpable negligence and arranging land and pension apportionment systems. But there are many difficulties, of principle as well as practice, in carrying this through to a man's private actions, some of which were mentioned in the previous section; avoidability, corruptibility, power and speed limitations on enforcement, and cost--the direct cost plus the loss of productive workers. Despite the tremendous cost, an external police force usually offers us a tremendous gain. But there is a better way. An effective conscience is simply an internal policeman--inescapable, incorruptible, immediate, and inexpensive. To the degree that poeple can be trained to continue to be moral even when not under surveillance, we have the major advantages of the police without their drawbacks.* This might be called the labor theory of value-intuition or the economic interpretation of morality, and it is certainly clear that the historical support of religion and religious ethics by the rich is not without its rewards on this earth.

Thus, there is another way in which 'instinctive' unselfishness or moral sensitivity (i.e., strong or weak morality) is of value to a society, and social evolution has undoubtedly favored societies which encouraged or inherited these qualities, whatever bad reasons they may have had for doing so. It is important to notice that although we may be sure that perfect moral discipline or unselfish love is unattainable, we also know that striving to instil it is worthwhile since partial success produces partial rewards. There is therefore no basis for thinking that the social idealization we have discussed is irrelevant; the world is a partly moral place and to live in it we have to undergo considerable pressure in the direction of morality. There is clearly some advantage for us and our children in having the world like that, even if we and our children have to pay the price of being brainwashed into semi-morality. But a crucial question remains: wouldn't it be better still (for the selfish individual) if he could avoid this corruption of his noble savage instincts--if selfish desires deserve such glamor--into the milk-sop standards of the slave? Shouldn't he act morally where necessary and selfishly where possible, while trying to get everyone else to act morally so as to benefit from their sacrifices?

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*The police serve a number of functions for which they would always be valuable, including traffic and crowd regulation, safety, and to some extent social and even moral instruction.

12. The Adaptability Advantage for the Moral Community

From the standpoint of a normally selfish person, the whole prospect of the unselfish life appears to involve painful sacrifices; indeed to most people it appears unrelievedly dreary as well as being entirely pointless as a solitary endeavor. But one cannot judge other ways of life as if they were superimposed upon one's current values; they have their own *values*, as well as their own patterns of behavior. If a selfish person is to be given reasons for the superiority of the unselfish way of life, the reasons must carry weight for him now, but obviously they do not have to involve the assumption that he will *remain* selfish, i.e., that his rewards in the unselfish way of life will be confined to the assuaging of selfish desires. We are not considering what it would be like to *act* like a saint while *wanting* to be a sinner. We are considering what it would be like to *be* unselfish, i.e., to *want* to help someone in need where one can do so usefully, and to be *glad* to be able to help. Most of us are that way some of the time, at Christmas or with children. The question is whether one can give good non-moral reasons for being like that more of the time and with more people.

It is clearly possible to derive real pleasure from doing things for others. And it does not seem irrational to do this if we can. Suppose someone told us we were being irrational in giving Christmas presents to our children when we could spend the money on ourselves. He would be assuming that we didn't really enjoy it, that it was just an act, or that the pleasure we take in it could be shown to be misguided (cf. smoking). But neither has to be true. When we try to evaluate the unselfish way of life as a possibility, it is a simple misunderstanding to think that it involves painful deprivations simply because it involves giving away things that a selfish person would want to keep. And, far from there being grounds for supposing unselfish values irrational, we are developing a rather extensive argument to the contrary. But we are now talking of an advantage possessed by strong morality, in which unselfish behavior is strongly rewarding, by contrast with weak morality, which merely recognizes and obeys the moral requirement, often with something of a struggle. It is clear that progressing to strong morality offers a gain in the reduction of such pangs, although society does not insist that this further step be taken (require it, expect it, punish its absence) as we can with weak morality; we can only advise it, admire it, reward its presence. The society must have (gains the most from) moral conformity; its best way to get it is to encourage moral enthusiasm, which brings a bonus both to the individual (reduction of conflicts) and the society (better conformity, more supererogation). But one hesitates to punish pupils for not doing their assignments the easiest way compatible with meeting the requirements, partly since to do it a harder way is its own punishment. Our goal in teaching the next generation should of course be strong morality, since it brings more benefits and fewer pangs.*

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*A precise account of the moral attitudes should include some minor points. First, there can be self-denying hatred; but this would not normally be and is not here regarded as a form of unselfishness. The latter is directed to positive consideration of others. It is not the same as selflessness or extreme altruism, where all concern for the self is abandoned; it is committed only to recognition of the equality of the worth of others. The common suggestion that zero consideration for all others would be a case of equal consideration is mistaken--it is not a case of consideration at all, and certainly not a case of consideration equal to that accorded oneself. A commitment to the equal worth of others does not mean that one has exactly the same obligations to every child in Africa as to one's own children. A rational morality is concerned with _efficient_ discharge of the moral commitment (see below).

Just as giving away some material possessions to the needy or working for their benefit is not a sign of something unpleasant about the unselfish life, so the typically inexhaustible supply of situations and people in need of help is not a sign of something dreary or draining about it. Indeed, since these are simply opportunities to do what one wants to do and enjoys doing, they are in precisely the same category as a trout stream in the garden for a keen angler. Of course, if one supposed that the needs of others _always_ have precedence over one's own, one would never have any time for one's own activities; but no such rule follows from the moral axiom.

If cow's milk is hard to get in Kurdestan, it is obviously good rational advice to try cultivating a taste for goat's milk, which is readily available. The unselfish person has the enormous advantage over the selfish one that he derives at least as much pleasure from activities and achievements that are always and easily open to him (and in which others, selfish or not, will encourage him) as the ruthless tycoon, collector, or crook does from the occasions when he successfully defeats his competitors. And this advantage exists whether or not others have selfish views or behavior. Since for every winner there's at least one loser, whereas for every good turn there's at least one beneficiary, the moral group gains at better than a two-for-one rate over the selfish group. Antecedently, not knowing whether one will be a winner or a loser, the selfish group offers less than even odds, and the moral group a guarantee of reward with regard to situations of this species.

Of course, the practices of business and collecting can be undertaken in such a way as to be rewarding to the winner without inflicting more deprivation of the loser than he is sensibly able and willing to risk; and in this form provide socially productive and personally rewarding activities. Competition is a mighty motive, but it is crude to suppose it can only serve unrestrainedly selfish ends. Of course, business and collecting are activities open to a moral man. Indeed, when indulged in by amoral men they are simply more hazardous and not more rewarding.

So the way of life of a saint, even in the company of sinners, is intrinsically remarkably attractive. The truth in 'Virtue is its own reward' is, of course, that it can be. And to the extent that his companions are unselfish, and his admission to their company dependent on his own unselfishness, or to the extent even slight and occasional--that his example or unhypocritical inducements can persuade them to be so, extra bonuses of expectancy and productivity attach themselves to him from the interacting sub-group. In short, a powerful case can be made for taking what we might call the (strong) Morality Pill, which immediately and painlessly transforms one's attitudes. We must look further into the question whether and how a rational selfish man should act in the absence of such an easy means of transformation, and whether other pills would be still better.

The objection might be raised at this point that the above case for the moral way of life only has merit for the timid, the ones who can't make it the mean way. The opposing doctrine, for the sturdy citizen, might be nastily summarized: ('If you can, do them in; if you can't, preach'), but it has a strong attraction--after all, if you're enjoying life the way things are in a competitive and rather selfish world, why rock the boat? There are three reasons for rocking that can be couched in terms of concern to the selfish man. First, there are always great uncertainties about the future, and on any selfish way of life these are magnified because the chief values are the especially variable matters of one's health, wealth and virility or virginity. The moral community provides not only better old age security and children's benefits (expectancy gain) but more old and other age; and it does it for less taxes (productivity gain) and with a built-in income booster and jail-keeper-outer* (the adaptability gain). It is not spineless for a successful man to take out insurance--and the moral attitude is the best insurance at no charge. Nor does it show weakness of mind any more than weakness of spirit; it is almost a standard example of prudence, i.e., rational farsighted behavior. Second, selfish standards have a very strong tendency to run away with the rider: 'keeping up with the Jones' is often the slogan for an endless quest for ulcers. That tendency has been overcome, by those who have mastered or avoided it in themselves, often because they have seen or luckily inherited the value of finding the work itself rewarding rather than just the gains or the winning; the craftsman replaces the collector or the cutthroat. The crucial insight here is that one can always do good work or good works; but if one's goal is to do work that is better rewarded than others, then there is a far greater vulnerability to chance or unjust fluctuations in the scale of rewards and indeed an incentive to bring about the rewards illegitimately with the attendant further risks. The degree of control or insight involved in the orientation towards quality or service is no more than that which can readily (and does frequently) lead to a more humane view of the Jones--and others--with its considerably wider opportunities for rewarding experiences. In short, ruthless competition, even for the successful, is a lean and stringy diet--it forms a valuable element in a well-balanced menu, but is poor fare for total subsistence. It leaves little for the one-third of adult life after retirement, for the one-half of adult life not spent at work, for the family the pure competitor acquires because doing that is a competition too, for the friendship of equals.

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*Except in a society whose laws are so violently immoral as to require martyrdom in protest (discussed later).

These remarks are not going to be conclusive in every case, and they are certainly not going to convince everyone to whom they apply conclusively. Of course, the question to be answered is not whether they _will_ persuade someone living the selfish life and enjoying it, but whether he is mistaken not to be convinced. Present pleasure is too often overweighted in our considerations. But it is not being maintained that a rational man necessarily forfeits claim to that title by denying that it would be in his interest to become moral. There could be, and perhaps there has been, a person in whose special circumstances the selfish life really provides the best of all lives that are possible for him. He might really be too old to change, or so near death as not to have reason to change. But such special cases are not important for the general question of the best way of life, for we may still say of this man that the unselfish life _would have_ been the best of all possible lives for him. The claim that the unselfish and rational, i.e., moral life* _is_ superior would still be a powerful one if it referred only to men as yet unborn, as yet unmoulded, untrained, uncorrupted. When we talk of a certain career as ideal for someone with manipulative skills and high reliability, we do not necessarily mean that it is appropriate for everyone like that to drop their tools or pens and begin training for it now, at their age. We mean that it appears to be more rewarding to those in it than any other; we mean that if we could start all over again, and could qualify, it would be the best choice. That is the weakest form of the claim for the moral life; and to it we add that almost anyone can qualify, that most people can still qualify, and hence that everyone should be trained as if he can until it is proved that he cannot.

13. The Moral Compromise*

An absolute dictator who was absolutely selfish and absolutely the moral system in order to make a case for its rationality, which we must do to complete the proof of any particular moral judgment.

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*If the argument of this chapter is correct, the rational life involves unselfishness, but in order to avoid begging the question we here talk (redundantly) of the rational unselfish life, as compared to the rational selfish one (a contradiction, so it will be argued).

*In the course of this section appeal will be made to various moral judgments for illustrative purposes, although proofs will not be given of these judgments. The method for giving such proof has already been indicated--the calculation beginning with equality of rights of those concerned and proceeding by taking account of differences of interest--and more will be said later in connection with specific examples. At this stage it is necessary to elaborate on certain general features of

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incapable of or heedless about future weakening such as premature death by another's hand, illness, the need for active or passive love, esteem by peers, etc., would not have any need for morality. These conditions have never been met, as far as we can tell, and the chances are now even more strongly against the possibility that they ever will be. That possibility is entirely remote from the condition of the shortsightedly happy but highly selfish tyrant of the office or classroom enjoying his suburban status in a town where he has a fair chance of being mugged, run over or into, or being crippled by disease or error, in a country with a substantial chance of a recession which will put him out of work, in a world with a substantial chance of a war that will kill or ruin him. It is still remote from the condition of the ruthless petty dictators whose fall and death or exile is almost as reliable as their failure to believe it can happen to them. Indeed, the conditions probably apply only to the Devil in a world without God. But they are conceivable--and it should be said immediately that in such conditions there *is* no reason for that man to take account of the values and rights of others. Morality, Nietzsche said, is for the weak. This is true enough, but in the relevant sense we are all weak. To be precise, we are all less powerful than any significantly probable opposing combination of human and natural forces, and for that reason there is great advantage in the moral compromise for every human being.

A word about the general line of the argument. We are currently talking about ways of life for *a* rational man. We have previously talked about ways of life for a *group* of rational men. We have not yet talked about the rationality of particular acts for rational men. The distinction between the Devil and the dictator suggests that the powers required to make morality irrelevant as a way of life are superhuman. But it does not show that a rational selfish man in the midst of life could not have good grounds for a particular immoral action. We are proving the irrationality of particular immoral acts via the irrationality of the immoral attitude which lies behind them; we are not saying that they fail to serve that immoral attitude effectively.

13.1 The Exploitation Ideal

To put it bluntly, the purely selfish man would like everyone else to be his slave but he lacks the power to compel them or the salesmanship to persuade them. His natural tendency is to approach this ideal as closely as possible by finding weaker or more stupid groups he can exploit. This crude realization is of course one of the roots of the exploitation of racial and religious minorities and, at certain stages of economic development, of the slave, tenant farmer, and wageworker. Both kinds of examples provide us with excellent demonstrations of the shortsightedness of the exploitation. Exploitation of labor tends to produce the reaction of large-scale nationalization or simple governmental expropriation (depending on whether one thinks of Europe or South America) or to the sub-governmental reactions of rampant unions--feather-bedding, workrules, pseudo-overtime, intimidation and plant destruction. Exploitation of racial minorities now brings the lucky exploiter (and those who tolerate him) race riots, a poorer economy due to lowered per capita consumption, large unsafe areas due to the crime rate of subsistence slums and the exploiter who pushes his luck collects the Mau Mau through the back door and the land-reformers through the front. Does this happen in the lifetime of a selfish man? Not always; some of the early slavers in Africa made their fortunes and died in bed. Could not a selfish man rationally decide to take the chance? Some chances cannot rationally be taken. A man cannot rationally decide to take a chance on not paying for fire insurance when he can easily afford the premium and can't afford to replace his house. It's a foolish chance to take, for anyone with the usual interests in survival and the usual capacity of enjoying different ways of life. Prudence, which is long-term rationality, is the process of taking _precautions_--taking early steps to guard against unattractive even if unlikely eventualities. The very simplest considerations of prudence have now--though not always--outdated exploitation as a rationally defensible approach, even if the exploiter had no interest in his children's welfare. And a more fundamental kind of prudence, we argue here, requires the prudential modification of the exploiter's attitude.

But cannot the rational man take _any_ calculated risks? Of course he can, but not where the stakes are his life and the gains no greater than he can obtain in other ways with less risk. There is not a great deal of difference between the courage of an explorer and the attitude of a ruthless slaver, from _their_ point of view. Each sees certain risks and decides the prospective rewards are adequate compensation. Now we can hardly argue that all explorers of hazardous terrain or all mountain-climbers are _irrational_. Of course, there are some who incorrectly assess their own love of danger and discover their mistake. They were wrong but not thereby shown irrational. The rationality of risk-taking depends almost entirely on the exact motivation. A taste for excitement, love of novelty, the quest for new knowledge, are motives with increasing degrees of rationality and social utility as they stand; it is the extent to which they supersede other values, e.g., consideration for others, that is the hidden part of the iceberg. In some explorers, as in the slavers, the motivation becomes immoral because it chokes off all regard for the welfare of others. And it is this aspect of it that tends to make it irrational by decreasing the chance of survival or success. The primary motive is not irrational--only allowing it to displace certain others. In an explorer, for example, the drive to go forward alone can become irrational because it leads to inadequate consideration of provisions for the return journey. And so on. There clearly remain explorers for whom the risks are worth it, who operate rationally within their framework of values, and who would be less happy at home than even on an unsuccessful trip. It is nevertheless not absurd for them to consider the fact that their expectations of life would be greater if they had a somewhat different set of attitude and realized as much enjoyment of life within that framework. To the extent that this is true and the alternative within their power, they are still imprudent. But often enough, the alternatives are not available or the society benefits from their atypical attitude so that we can rejoice rather than reform them, unless we are married to them.

The same initial situation applies with regard to the slavers. There were undoubtedly some for whom this career offered rewards they reasonably assessed as being well worth the risks, whose conscience did not trouble them, and whose community thoroughly supported their activity. For them, the way of life was rationally defensible, given the starting point of an amoral attitude towards negroes. But it seems clear that starting point was never plausible, even in the absence of facts we now possess; it is quite obviously no longer defensible, as appears in the discussion of the 'moral franchise' later. Unlike the explorers' values, the slavers necessarily involved a brutal disregard for others whose differences from the slaver were not clearly greater than the differences between the slaver and his handicapped or subnormal fellow-citizens.

It has been thought to be a filial duty and a prudent act to eat one's parents when they become too feeble to gather food, because it is better for the tribe to kill them than to have them starve and because they prefer it, and because we acquire the virtues of what we eat and all right-thinking people believe their parents have great virtues. The decision whether it was rational for that tribe, in subsistence conditions, to commit patriphagy, is like the decision about the slavers in that it involves two stages. The first starts by accepting their beliefs and judges their actions in the light of those beliefs. The judgment here must surely be favorable, given the fact that the alternative is the death of all. The second stage involves questioning the rationality of their beliefs (cf., the rationality of the slaver's amoral attitude) and here we find it very difficult to make a decision without the most exhaustive research into the habits and knowledge of that time and place. It is clear what kind of data bears on the decision, but we would need to be sure we had a very complete reconstruction of their world-picture before we could decide. It is not, of course, essential that we be able to make that decision; the present situation is what chiefly concerns us. Whatever the final decision, the problem exists of a correct decision in the absence of all the data we need. With regard to that, there is an important consideration which makes past successes by exploiters scarcely relevant to the conclusions of the selfish man today. Once the lessons have been learnt by the revolutionaries, from successful colonial revolt, unionism or civil rights movements, it becomes very clear that even groups with little political power (originally) can successfully develop enormous leverage, given moderate cooperation, ingenuity and patience. Moreover, it is clear that the explicit adoption of definite though humane reprisal pressures against the leading exploiters, at first by such movements, and eventually by law and public custom, could multiply the leverage of moral reform still further. Once the exploited have learnt this lesson, the probability of successful long-term exploitation diminishes almost to zero. The days of the Union of South Africa are obviously numbered.

We may talk here of moral reform rather than mere social reform, because the directions of most rational long-term compromises between countervailing forces tends to be the same as that of the moral solution. To begin with, there is a temptation for the stronger force to consolidate its advantage by pressing for more favorable contractual consideration. This is not only short-sighted in that it breeds ill-will which eventually becomes vengeance when the balance of power changes, but our long experience with this possibility should lead us quickly to incorporate severe penalties in the explicit moral and legal code for such exploitation of a power advantage, penalties which will make it irrational to take advantage of a balance of power. The retroactive reassessment of profits on defense contracts in the U. S., if coupled with substantial fines, would be an excellent example of the institutionalization of reprisals for immoral use of an advantage. There is also an analogy in the use of forced or ill-advised confessions, which recent decisions of the Supreme Court have rendered almost totally useless.

It is not accidental that the social equilibrium should tend towards the moral solution the more carefully it is thought out and the longer the term of consideration. For, on the view here proposed, the moral system is the optimal long run system, applied to attitudes as well as to acts and rules based on present attitudes.

This convergence of the moral and the practical in human relations is closely analogous to the budgeting for research in large corporations, or for quality control in large manufacturing concerns. These practices almost never pay off as well as a big advertising campaign or ingenious refinancing, diversification or depreciation basis juggling--in the short run. But, taking account of the long-run, they are, done and advertised sensibly, the safest bet of all. Here, too, there is a gross historical bias in favor of this conclusion, as the consumer becomes increasingly well-educated and organized, through the consumers' unions, counsels, and panels, co-ops, mail and membership buying arrangements, college and extension courses, etc. So improvement and quality in the product become increasingly important. As far as nationally distributed stable demand products are concerned it's increasingly difficult to make and maintain large profits from a shoddy product, and in almost no cases easier than the alternative approach. Of course, cosmetics, real estate, novelties, unethical drugs, insurance and many other sections of the market are still in a less desirable state.

The argument here involves no commitment to the inevitability of social progress, it is simply a comment on the existence of some desirable trends. The trends may reverse because long-term rationality is by no means the most powerful social force as yet and would have to be more powerful than the combination of all others that operate against it before progress could be guaranteed. The moral solution would still be the moral solution, whatever happens in fact, so we are not saying that what will happen is right or vice-versa. The moral solution is only the best long-term bet and the best bet doesn't always win; moreover, people don't always make the best bet.

But even if this line of talk isn't totally starry-eyed, isn't it still pretty naive? The way it has sounded so far, the suggestion about the rationality of immediate adoption of or progress towards the moral solution sounds like pro-labor, pro-integration promotion. What would be the other side's view? What might be the reaction of a hard-headed vice-president for labor relations, in the process of negotiating the triennial union contract, and thinking specifically about the union's attempt to get guaranteed employment for all employees with a ten-year standing? He's likely to say two things: "We may have to give it to them eventually, but that's no reason for giving it to them now," and "I don't operate as a moral reformer, I'm hired to make the company's case--and that's the stockholders' case--and it is clearly best served by conserving labor costs." The example and the replies illustrate several points about the moral compromise. First, there is absolutely no way of showing, from the facts given, that guaranteed employment is morally supportable. So the issue may be the entirely non-moral issue of settling mutually agreeable terms for a contract. On the other hand, it may have moral elements if the effects of dismissal on long-term employees who are residents of the factory town are extremely severe and avoidable by proper inventory and sales program planning, or insurable by diversification, etc. without disastrous effects on the company. And the moral conclusion would go against the union's claim if labor is in very short supply near the plant and the action required to handle this contractual commitment by the company will seriously jeopardise the research or plant budgets and hence the company's stability. The company negotiator is entirely right in saying that eventual compromises should not be anticipated--so long as the demand does not have moral backing. If it does, it's probably shortsighted to think that using his power in a labor-buyer's market, to overrule _moral_ obligations on the employer's part will pay off. There are other ways--most obviously, wage _level_, within limits--where his economic advantage can legitimately be applied. Insofar has he has some freedom to negotiate terms, the fact that he is an agent of only one of the two interests represented in the dispute does not mean he should ignore moral considerations if he can. Not only will ignoring morality be rightly regarded as reducing any moral and semi-moral obligations of the workers to the company (e.g., care of plant, voluntary efficiency improvement, loyalty in market reverses) which can easily amount to ten times the other gain, but the effect on future negotiations when the power balance is different is likely to be disastrous. Morality takes no sides in the long-run; it is universal unionism, but it is also full-scale free enterprise. Its value lies in its neutrality.

Much of what has just been said would apply to violations of a conventionally accepted but rationally unsupportable morality. The difference is that a conflict eventually arises between what the evidence suggests as the most efficient solution and that which the local morality indicates. Up to a point, of course, consideration for people's preferences even if they are irrational is a good rational-moral principle; but at some stage it becomes foolish and indeed immoral to insist on an indefensible choice, e.g., a refusal in this day and age to allow a man to till his own fields on Easter Monday.

Again, much of what has been said is relevant enough in many circumstances, but it may seem to lack force when we encounter the extreme case. There surely are some entrepreneurs who would argue that their dominant interest in life is in the successes of the market place and that they would gladly take the risks of detection to pull off a gigantic if slightly shady deal, which perhaps takes a slice off the tax-collector's pie or that of the featherbedded union man or the wealthy widows of the world. Can this be said to be irrational? Now such people have an extremely strong tendency to forget their own freely entered contractual obligations to and affection for wife and children, who will certainly suffer severely from the jail sentence which is a possible consequence of an action about which they were not consulted. They are compulsive competitors, disregarding considerations which are of great importance to themselves in the long run. But a truly unscrupulous man regards his dependents as merely conveniences for his present life. Such a man spends all his current income rather than put a few dollars a month into a life insurance policy, for, of course, life insurance will only benefit others and he can lie to his wife about this without guilt since it is convenient to do so.

About such a man we naturally speak in condemnatory moral language saying that by such an approach he exploits the rest of society, in his petty way, analogously to the dictator or the criminal, since society eventually pays the bill for his illicit profits if he succeeds and for his family's support if he fails. It follows that there are good reasons for society to take steps against him by the application of sanctions, legal or pre-legal, such as ostracism by the business or consumers' community. Much social pressure to behave properly and support charities is in this way self-protectively allied with the economic advantages of in-group status. In general, then, in a rational group the risks of extremely unscrupulous behavior are simply made so large as to make it irrational. If his peccadilloes are minor, the moral considerations, which are then dominated by the overarching principle of minimizing interference, require only that he be plainly identified as amoral and excluded from the normal trust accorded to the moral man. But his cost to the society in terms of the direct loss of the expectancy advantage and the possible effect of his bad example, which may indirectly lose more expectancy advantage, is still important enough for some mild social pressure to be applied, roughly amounting to a continued reminder of the advantages of the moral commitment in terms of both convenience and increased expectations. In sum, his life should be made unattractive to the degree that he represents a serious social harm. Now, our society has certainly not adjusted its deterrents to the level required for making the predator always mistaken in calculating that crime will probably pay. And at this point we must turn to the fundamental consideration of his attitudes. For even if the risks aren't really overwhelming, they still exist and can be avoided by a change of attitude; or, if relished as such, enjoyed just as much when attached to a less anti-social form of activity. Someone who could prove that no such transfer of motivation was possible for them would avoid the charge of irrationality; but the fact that someone is incapable of the best life does not show it is not the best life. It would be at this point, however, that the overlap of morality and rationality would terminate. His immoral actions could not be said to be irrational ones for him. It should be noted that no one has ever made a plausible case for his own incapacity for moral re-direction.

13.2 The Indoctrination Ideal and the Retreat to Equality

Quite apart from the arguments for self-conversion of full members it is clear from the earlier discussion that a community will benefit greatly if it can encourage all future members of the community to adopt the moral attitude. The new members are mainly the children so this conclusion implies that everyone has an interest in supporting a system which will ensure that everyone's children, including their own, acquire some moral feelings. For the only feasible way of getting a school, court, and public opinion system running or supporting it, which will apply pressure to others' children in this direction involves at least the probability of having one's own children indoctrinated. Now the selfish man would ideally prefer to see this training aimed to make everyone else's children serve him, his own children going into the served or servant category depending on whether he has selfish or unselfish love for them. But there is no advantage in this argument for others* and he lacks the virtual monopoly of power that would be necessary to control them in the absence of any prospective benefits for them. Moreover, he still stands to obtain vast advantages even from the moral compromise indoctrination procedure, which trains all children to view all as deserving equal consideration, and for this compromise procedure everyone else also gains. Thus there is an intrinsic advantage about the moral compromise which is lacking in the exploitation ideal, namely that it represents the optimally attractive arrangement to all rational participants. Unbalance the principle of equal consideration so as to favor a characteristic such as skin color, when no arguments based on the welfare of each can be given for the discrimination, and the system will fail. For it now incorporates exploitation, will lose the support of those discriminated against as soon as they come to recognize this, and probably and properly elicit later reprisals. There was a time when one class could use a myth or power to maintain unjust disparities, but mass education is ending that. Recourse to rational ethics is the only alternative to the see-saw of short-sighted separate power struggles, victories, and reprisals, whether in the field of wage negotiations or international affairs. And rational ethics means the recognition of equality of rights.

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*Even if they are unselfish, they have no reason to think selfish Jones has any more need of their time than they do, and hence it would not be rewarding. Working for others who want slaves but do not need help is not morality, it's masochism; and since it destroys the expectancy gain there's no case for mass conversion to masochism.

Equality of rights is, of course, the only basis with this 'equilibrium' property and it is for this reason and neither because of some divine dole nor because of an unrealistic assessment of man's equality of intelligence, diligence, or power that rights are correctly said to be equal. Rights must be prima facie equal for the same reason that dollar bills must be prima facie equal; a currency must have a constant unit before it can be used to evaluate differences. Once we can show the need for a moral currency, the equality of rights follows as a necessity, for it is the defining property of morality. The problem is to show that in a world of interpersonal differences there is any sense to introducing an abstract concept of which everyone is said to have an equal allotment. The arguments above are intended to show that the very best system for handling practical problems of interpersonal relations is based on such a conception. The role of equality is that of a baseline; it determines the standard from which deviations must be justified. It is not a claim that there are no deviations. A very similar role is served in the sciences by the basic laws and tendency statements. We say, for example, that the natural state of motion is rectilinear, but we may readily agree that in the whole history of the universe there has never been a single case of rectilinear motion. The importance of the baseline is not to describe the usual situation but to lay a foundation for an explanatory edifice which will handle actual cases. The Aristotelian notion of natural motion as tending towards a state of rest is a much better approximation to a general truth about motion as we see it;

but it does not prove possible to develop a theory on this foundation which will efficiently handle all cases. Similarly, a theory which gave the rich more rights might be a better description of actual practice; but the most efficient social theory allots everyone equal rights, and is not in the least contradicted by gross inequality in the actual distribution of goods and services. In the usual applied moralities, great inequalities are acceptable but not great inequities. Insofar as his intelligence, diligence and power are greater, a man may earn more, own more, or increase his status in other ways, and rightly regard himself as in many ways a more important figure in the community--but not in the minutest degree more important morally. There are ways in which one can elevate one's moral worth, but they certainly preclude regarding oneself as more deserving, since to do that is to reject the moral axiom itself. 'Moral worth' in this sense, in which it can be increased, means moral merit or virtue and not moral rights. The police and the army will (have to) spend proportionately more time protecting a 'big man's' interests (since he owns proportionately more) and the contribution he has to make to taxes in order to match the widow's mite will appropriately be considerably greater. With regard to taxes going to other services, e.g., education, insurance and conservation, which serve the community as a whole, generally returning less to the rich than the poor, the justification of differential taxation is simply that equality of consideration requires attention to the ease or difficulty of a contribution, which is obviously not the same as the number of dollars contributed, but also dependent on the number of dollars left after the contribution. Tax rates should also depend on considerations of incentive, of course, and the exact use of the revenue. Of course, taxing a rich man to support a lazy man is an immoral as tax evasion by the rich man to avoid supporting the police; but as taxes hardly ever go to only one cause, the question whether a particular tax-system is just is usually very complicated. It is indeed an example of a complex practical moral issue almost never discussed in a rational way. Exactly why is it fair--if it is fair--for bachelors to pay school taxes, when no one pays them for entertaining their girl friends? The usual answers or lack of answers from a citizen provide a strong case for the need for a rational approach to ethics.

Criticisms and Refinements

14. Attitude Inertia and Self-Sacrifice

The whole system of morality for which the above arguments hold is based on one moral principle (equality of rights), one argument about attitudes which leads to action according to that principle, and one psychological claim about that attitude. The argument is that the strong moral attitude is an optimal position, i.e., that good arguments support adopting it and no good arguments lead to changing it. As a result it is, and properly should be, persistent. The psychological claim is that people can move towards the moral attitude under appropriate environmental, social, and self-help pressures. The persistence of the attitude when attained, combined with its attainability, are the keys to the problems which have usually defeated attempts to give a rational foundation for ethics. We shall refer to them as the assumptions of attitude inertia and attitude control. They will be the subject of the next two sections.

The expectancy advantage depends on minority sacrifice and a minority that was committed to self-sacrifice only until its turn came up, whereupon it immediately re-evaluated its attitudes and changed them would hardly provide the community with any advantages. We must decide whether this will or will not occur with regard to the moral attitude.

Attitude inertia is not only a psychological fact about attitudes; it is to some extent built into the concept of an attitude. As long as we have what we now call attitudes, they will by definition have more than moment-to-moment stability. They are the basis for moment-to-moment decisions about actions, not actions themselves. Practically speaking, it is difficult to conceive of the mental economy operating at all efficiently, perhaps even at all, without semi-constant dispositions. On the other hand, it will also be a great gain in efficiency, in the dimension of adaptability, if these dispositions are alterable in the long run.

So it is the nature of the reacting and reasoning process that provides us with the property of attitude inertia. Having acquired--no matter how, pill or persuasion--a conception of one's fellow men as intrinsically valuable, one has automatically acquired an immediate reason for doing whatever brings about their welfare, within--as we say--reason. The qualification may conservatively be taken to involve such limitations as 'up to the point of (a) helping those who can and will be better helped by others, or (b) helping others where more can be helped if I do not now spend time on direct aid, or (c) treating others more favorably than myself even when they have no special merits or needs I do not possess.'*

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*A case might be made for more extreme altruism, but not as a general policy, since it is an unstable solution to the problem of allotting rights. The Christian ethic has been interpreted as recommending extreme altruism and in this version differs from the Jewish. Standard illustration; two men in a desert, one cup of water, all of it needed to get one man to nearest oasis, no other chance of survival. Two good Christians hand it back and forth until it evaporates. The Talmud is often taken to recommend that the man who has it when the facts are discovered should drink it--a very practical solution. A rational morality would require (a) some study of any special claims to preferential treatment, e.g., number of dependents, social value of vocation (b) in the absence of these, the toss of a coin. The only general case for altruism would have to be based on the belief that it is necessary as an inspiration, to get people to the more modest level of morality.

In the case where a man has something approaching the strong/weak moral attitude, he will be acting morally because he likes/_prefers_ to act morally. If someone says to him, "Why not abandon the moral attitude and have more good things for yourself?" he would reply that getting things for himself at the expense of others is _not_ getting 'good things,' and has no attraction for him. Or he might reply, somewhat misleadingly, that he _is_ currently getting more'good things,' e.g., feelings that his life is worthwhile, than he would if he kept some of the 'good things,' i.e., material possessions, to which the bystander is referring. This reply is misleading because it sounds as if every time he does something moral it is really for selfish reasons ("getting good things"); in fact, it is _because it is moral_. His decision, long past, to accept (or take steps that would eventually lead him to accept) that _kind_ of reason was made for what _can_ be described as selfish reasons, the only ones that counted then. But they don't count any more. It's no good trying to pull the 'more rewarding way of life for you' move to get him back on the straight and narrow path of selfishness, because it's not a reversible argument. The moral life is better, from a selfish viewpoint, than the selfish life, but no corresponding arguments show the general superiority of selfishness for a man now moral. A man now moral is not contaminated by his past, he is not now secretly amenable to selfish arguments because once he was. He is motivationally no different from a man who is moral because he has been brought up that way--and such a man would not be persuaded. However a man gets to be moral, he is moral if he does what's moral because it's moral. So the moral life is a rationally stable solution to the problem of how to live. Still, just as there are odd circumstances in which, e.g., the dictator is rational to remain selfish, may there not be cases on the other side, where it would be rational to abandon unselfishness?

In the extreme case, when what a man is called on to sacrifice is his life, is it not a little unrealistic to suppose that he will not at that time see certain extremely tangible advantages about being selfish? For all advantages, including the pleasures of charitable works, require continued life.

Obviously giving up his life calls for a higher degree of commitment to the worth of others than giving up some time or money. It should be remembered that even if it were impossible that a human being so love another, or his duty, that he would die for another person, the arguments for morality of a more limited scope would still be conclusive. The major moral returns arise from more mundane matters than noble suicide. Yet is is possible for someone to sacrifice, or be willing to sacrifice, his life for others, simply because they will be saved by his act; indeed, it happens often enough, notably in the case of parents and soldiers. In the most frequent situation (as in drawing fire or distracting a predator) the agent does have some chance of survival, but is not greatly affected by this, so long as he knows his action is almost certain to save the other person(s). And there are very many cases where a man has some motivation from other sources (fear of detection, chance of reward, etc.), in which considerations of duty are enough to tip the balance. So morality's advantages are by no means dependent upon everyone being willing to go the whole way simply for morality's sake.

But given that people are capable of supreme sacrifice, partly or wholly for moral reasons, are they rational to do it? Should they not draw back at the last moment?

The Devil, tempting, says; Look, you've had a good life so far, an *admirable* one as well as a satisfying one. I won't even deny that, in your circumstances, it may have been the best possible kind of life. But your *luck* wasn't good--no fault of yours, of course-- and here you're facing the end of it all. Now, you surely don't want to get carried *too* far on this starry-eyed kick . . . it's time (as you used to say) for a rational objective look at the two alternatives. Stay with the suckers and die, or get smart and live, it's as simple as that--something or nothing. As a rational fellow you have to admit that a momentary lapse from grace is a small price for your life . . . and you can *more* than repay any damage in the years you'll have ahead. In fact, in the long run, with a little remorse to push you along, it's likely to be a definite *benefit* to society if you take things a little easy now, let up on that moral throttle a bit. And a *notable* benefit to you. . .

There is no doubt that this kind of appeal will cften succeed, because people are often not fully committed to the moral attitude and are not moved in the same direction by other considerations; after all, this is the moment when they have to weigh their commitment to it against all their selfish values. But for a man who has a substantial commitment or a small commitment that's enough to tip the balance of considerations in a particular case, the Devil's appeal has no more foothold than the suggestion to a moderately decent man that he should steal from a beggar's cup because gaining even a little money for no effort is rational. A moderately decent man doesn't *want* money stolen from a beggar; it is not a value for him. A reasonably decent man doesn't in the least want the million dollars he can get by stealing it from a charity for the indigent blind or paralyzed children. A moral man does not want a life he can have only at the expense of the death of others. This is what it really means to have the moral attitude, *this* attitude is the one that brings the group the greatest advantages in expectation, productivity and adaptability, and hence provides the strongest arguments for the general adoption and encouragement of this way of life.* Once adopted, to whatever degree (the more thoroughly adopted the more valuable the adaptability advantage is), it becomes one of a man's actual values and it can't be said to be irrational just because it points in a different direction from the others since the case for it depends on this. And it certainly can't be said to be irrational in that there were no reasons for adopting it.

What about the possibility that the probable circumstances of a particular person's life might be such as to make it irrational to adopt the moral attitude? Might there not be *some* situations in which it is simply frustrating or unpleasant, and not rewarding, and in which the selfish life would be much more rewarding in its own terms? We begin with the easier cases.

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*One might live up to the highest demands of morality even if one only has what we have called the weak moral attitude. But it is not possible to provide such strong reasons for adopting this attitude and it is not so powerful a guarantee of moral behavior.

For frustration to occur would require that no-one that one could help needed help, that no contributions to the common good by creative work or labor were possible . . . it is hard to imagine. But the possibility is not a real possibility anyway, for a quite different kind of reason. Morality does not replace all other interests, it is simply a further interest, ideally with the potency to outweigh the others in any conflict situation. If the moral interest cannot be indulged, a man has many others on which to fall back and no sense of loss in doing so. For if no-one needs his help, this means that others are well and happy--and from this he directly derives satisfactions if he has the strong moral attitude. If his frustration is supposed to spring from seeing others who need his help but won't accept it directly, there will still be many ways he can work towards changing this impediment to helping them, e.g., by education. Or he may be able to do something constructive other than by doing it for someone who can reject it, e.g., by contributing toward medical research. If the frustration is supposed to come from seeing what needs to be done for others and being unable to achieve it through lack of cooperation or resources, it is no different from the frustrations that beset a selfish man in attempting to acheive his goals. In both cases, it can serve the good purpose of being a good to further efforts or, if allowed to develop to excess, it can become a source of neurotic incapacitation. The latter possibility is simply a defect in one's capacity for sensible living, in no way a special hardship of the moral life.

In general, then, the attitudinal change suggested is peculiarly immune to invidious comparison with alternatives, as far as likelihood of frustration is concerned. Of course, a society which directly persecuted anyone who tried to help others would be an environment in which the moral attitude would be a handicap, but it is hard to see how the society could survive for long enough to develop such penalties. It must be severely anti-adaptive to impose sanctions on the saving of lives or the keeping of promises. The most extreme proponents of individualism might argue that only by punishing moral behavior could we get people to stand on their own two feet. But it is immoral behavior to coddle where coddling is harmful.

There will certainly be particular occasions or particular issues with regard to his stand on which a society will savagely attack a moral man, as many of the great moral reformers have discovered. But the same risk attends any way of life which involves a leadership role and the pinnacles are rarely reached by the rearguard. Besides, true explorers regard the heat and the mosquitoes as occupational hazards; no pleasure at all, but of far smaller consequence than attaining their goals. The man with no ambition may avoid the mosquitoes, but as a goal in life this provides a prospect somewhat lacking in great moments; and, of course, it's obvious that teaching that kind of ideal is no way for the town to get the swamp drained.

Suppose that the prospective convert to the moral life happens to be in circumstances where it is obvious an immediate and severe sacrifice will be required of a moral man. In a sufficiently extreme case, this would constitute a good reason against moral conversion--it is a version of the Great Dictator case, where a straight loss is guaranteed. But the mere fact that a heavy commitment of material goods or of time would be involved would not show there were good reasons against conversion since these are resources whose expenditure on behalf of others can be rewarding to a moral person. Only if it could be shown that one's life or health would have to be laid down could a case be made in terms of the necessity of these for any type of rewarding endeavor. This leads us to consideration of a different kind of counter-example.

We might ask, Is there some other attitude, besides the moral one, which might in a similar way be shown to be even more prefereable? In particular, we should look for any way of life that this kind of reasoning identifies as admirable but which is so absurd a consequence of it as to cast doubt on the whole procedure. A most interesting move of this kind originates from a consideration of the kamikaze or suicide pilots used by the Japanese in the last stages of the war against the U. S. and her allies. These pilots were volunteers who felt that the chance to die for their Emperor by striking a great blow against the Allies was more important than life. Extending the case, might one not argue that the most satisfying possible set of values would be one headed by the value of a peaceful (or glorious, or violent, or painful) death: for this is certainly easy to obtain.* For a selfish man, wouldn't this be the perfect answer?

Here the Devil of the earlier dialog comes into his own. If one makes death, in whatever form, an actual goal, one eliminates all possibility of fulfillment of other hopes and interests, apart from the brief moments of glory before death. The possibility of enjoyment of all other kinds is to be wiped out, intentionally, as part of a 'way of life'--and for what? Not for the sense of achievement that one can get from actions that one considers worthwhile, for one is never in a position to reflect on a successful suicide, glorious or otherwise. Indeed, the only expectations one has, with death as one's highest ideal, is the expectation of contemplating a failure, since only if one fails will one have any experiences at all. If it is argued that the pleasures are those of anticipation, one must point out that these pleasures then become a good reason for prolonging life, and comparable pleasure can surely be obtained from anticipation of goals which are consistent with sustained enjoyment. We are not arguing that given the commitment to a glorious death, he (rationally) should change his mind at the last moment, only that he (rationally) should select another kind of commitment at the earlier stage. Given that his brightest value is a glorious death, it is, from that point on, rational to act as he does.

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*This example was suggested by Gilbert Harman.

Notice the differences between the death-risk here and in the moral life. In the latter case, we argue that the risk of self-sacrifice exists, but that the gain in overall expectations of reward are more than enough to compensate for this possible loss. Apart from the purely personal point of view, one must also consider the feedback gains through the social loop. There is a substantial extra gain from any other individual with respect to whose moral commitment one has access because of one's own similar commitment, e.g., by using one's own good example in training one's children, supporting general measures which affect oneself. This gain does not exist with respect to the suicide ideal. Finally, in considering which kind of ideals to teach one's children and for which to encourage general sanctions, there are the considerations of expectancy, internalization of law-enforcement, etc., which make the moral ideal best. Notice that the kamikaze pilot may be taken as exhibiting a highly moral ideal (since his motive may be patriotic) whereas the straight death-as-a-way-of life line is simply selfish. Indeed, the main value of the kamikaze example is to show the relative ease with which a commitment to the ultimate sacrifice can be made even when there are no redeeming long-run expectation gains.

These explorations of the nature of commitment thus do not appear to weaken the case for moral commitment, but rather to strengthen it by revealing its function more clearly. The comparison with theistic commitment is worth noting. Moral commitment involves no commitment to untrue or unsupported assertions. It does involve a claim with unusual logical properties, the claim that others are of equal value, which reflects not a discovery about other people so much as a discovery about the relative merits of different ways of regarding them. A man may come to regard others as things to be valued (ends in themselves), for reasons which appealed to him just because he did not so regard them, i.e., from the 'benefits' the belief brings. The theist may commit himself to theism for exactly the same kind of reason--but in his case it doesn't make the claim true, because the theistic claim is not simply a claim about a man's best attitude. It is a claim about the existence of a special kind of being. To say theism is "true for him" simply means be believes it, although it isn't, in fact, true; no such abandoment of reason is involved in moral commitment. Non-theistic religious commitment is very like or is a form of moral commitment, and the only difficulty is that there are usually several divergences of such a position from the moral position we are discussing, and no way to justify them, such as the Buddhist ban on alcohol.

15. Attitude Inertia and Some Moral Puzzle-Cases

We have seen that the benefits of morality are essentially connected with the nature and consequences of the moral attitude, not just with the nature and consequences of moral acts or principles, and this general point has specific consequences which provide a basis for treating some famous moral puzzles. We will begin a discussion of these with an example which is easier than they are, but provides us with a useful lead-in to them.

Should a soldier always obey the orders of his superior officer? The treatment of war crimes has made clear that common moralities draw a line at some point. But it is, of course, extremely important to instil in the soldier a readiness to obey even when he does not understand the reasons for the orders, or indeed when he strongly disagrees with them. This line is not usually thought to include any duty to perform apparently treacherous acts without explanation, or to require the active improvement of methods for murdering prisoners (Nuremberg Trials). For the benefits that accrue to the moral group from the commitment to instant obedience will be cancelled out by the losses if the area of absolute obedience is extended into the territory of the most terrible crimes. In order to reap the benefits on which survival depends we take the calculated risk in time of war of instilling obedience which will extend to bad or immoral orders. The mere fact that the inertia of the obedience attitude will undoubtedly carry obedience too far on some occasions--where it isn't obviously wrong to obey, but actually turns out to be wrong--does not show that the attitude is to be abandoned. Indeed it does not even show that on those occasions the soldier was wrong to obey--he was right, though a civilian might not have been. It follows that an officer must explain orders which appear absolutely improper, whenever there is time to do so, or not expect obedience. This in no way extends to orders which simply appear tactically wrong or involve sacrifice, for those, it can be seen in advance by all parties, are the domains where training to instant obedience pays off.

Now for the puzzles. You are at the bedside of a dying friend. He tells you that he has a more recent will than the one at his lawyer's office and he tells you where it is. He asks you to promise to take it to the lawyer. You promise to do so. He dies happy and you now discover that the new will transfers the huge estate from a charitable and educational trust to his worthless spend-thrift nephew, who had always managed to conceal his defects from his uncle. If you destroy the new will, it seems clear to you that a very great benefit to mankind will ensue; if you keep your promise, only a wastrel will profit. Your friend is dead and he died happy--you can no longer consider the effect on his feelings or his welfare. Does not the kind of moral position advocated here require that one break one's promise, indeed make it an obligation or even a duty to do so; and is that not seriously at variance with what a man with some moral sensitivity would feel? For even if he was not certain you should keep your promise, he would certainly deny that it was your duty to break it.*

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*The relevance of ordinary moral sensitivity is two-fold. First, a rational morality overlaps with many traditional moralities, and hence the finger of a conscience steeped in one of the traditional systems may point the rational way. Second the moral sense, like the grammatical sense, is immensely more sensitive than any explicitly formulated set of rules so far devised, and so, given the first point, deeply deserves our respect while we are attempting to formulate an adequate set of principles.

Several points are involved. First, a considerable number of relevant facts may not be known to you. The nephew may have been bound by documents already signed to act as a trustee for the money, sitting under a responsible board; the estate will thereby provide him with worthwhile employment and still go to good causes. Such a possibility, and there are many others, would alter the whole complexion of your action, and these possibilities form an important part of the reasons why a commitment to keep promises, even when doing so appears not to be for the best, is and should be a consequence of the moral commitment. The utility of this commitment is not for maximizing expected gains but for minimizing possible losses; it is an investment in safety, not for maximum yield. The dead man may have told others of the existence of the will or of other copies of it, and merely be using you as extra insurance. Your suppression of it will not prevent its adoption and will probably involve you in serious legal difficulties. (The attempt to consider cases where all such possibilities are absent is unrealistic and hence not productive of genuine counter-examples.)

The system of morality is designed to operate in this world, not in one where knowledge of all relevant circumstances is complete, and the capacity to calculate their consequences and weigh them correctly is perfect. Promise-keeping is worthwhile just because it provides us with the greater certainty of a man's control over his future actions to replace our uncertainty as to whether the outcome we want will come about in some other way. It is part of a system which maximizes expectations, but such a system must have parts whose justification is that they perform a function necessary to ensure that goal for the whole system, not that they each serve that function themselves. The safety valve on a steam boiler has the aim of reducing pressure, the exact opposite of the aim of the whole system, but it is an essential part of any effective system devoted to providing high pressure. Similarly, the system of moral principles contains many items whose role is crucial to but only contributory to maximizing expected gains*, not directly aimed at that goal.

Put from another point of view, the key question is not the consequences of your alternative actions in terms of the welfare of those directly affected, but the question of the general utility of being able to trust someone who makes a voluntary promise. Having the institution of the trustworthy promise is very like having the institution of unquestioning obedience in the army. Part of its value is that it can be called on and counted on when there is no time to explain and justify (or when secrecy precludes this), and when it is important to ensure that later inconveniences are not to be allowed to interfere with the promised performance. Naturally, one of the results of this institution is the occasional occurrence of unfortunate consequences--but the same is true if we eliminate the institution, so it is only a question of which alternative permits fewer disasters and provides more convenience. It must be remembered that there is no compulsion to make promises; they are an optional institution. If someone asks you to promise something, he is judging that on this occasion he wants unquestioning obedience and asks you to bind yourself to this out of your willingness to see his needs as important. His need is to have his wish obeyed, not just promised to be obeyed. Indeed, the moment that he cannot count on obedience without explanation, later justification, etc., much of the value of the institution vanishes. Once it is clear that being able to count on others to keep verbal promises has considerable value for people in certain circumstances, and does not lead to preponderantly bad consequences, then it is clear that the moral attitude which commits you to take account of what others want automatically commits you to carrying out promises.

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*In all the preceding discussions we talk crudely of 'maximizing gains for all,' but the only way in which we can appeal to this as an argument with impact for each individual requires that we construe it as involving strong protective principles which place safeguards--amounting to almost complete bans--on the extent to which the welfare of individuals may be sacrificed to further the welfare of others. The Pareto restriction, which does insist on the ban, is too extreme in any case, but particularly because welfare, for its purposes, is calculated in terms of the present set of utilities of each individual instead of in terms of the most satisfactory of the various alternative sets of utilities to which he can move with an effort that does not outweigh the consequent advantages. The concept of justice emerges partly from these individual-oriented constraints on maximization and partly also from the desireability of protecting useful motivations.

Up to a point. Just as there must, rationally, be limits to the soldier's obedience, there must be limits to what a promise commits one to if the value of promise-keeping is not to become a liability. So a great deal depends on the particular circumstances of the puzzle case. There are certainly cases where one would have to--indeed, one should--break one's promise, for example where (a) the lives of several people would obviously be endangered or lost by keeping it, perhaps because of acts unknown to the dying man, and (b) a minor whim of dotage appears, on the most careful examination, to be all that is at stake. The point of this discussion has been to show that the values involved in promise-keeping are not just those which accrue on a particular occasion, but those of the institution itself as a useful device in a society; and to show that this utility, properly analyzed, plus moral concern, obliges one to fulfil a promise even when the results appear somewhat contrary to the welfare of those involved--though not in all such cases. Just as the officer will be wise to explain orders which apparently command treachery or grossly gratuitous cruelty, so the promise-asker should try to explain demands to perform an extremely questionable action. When he does not, the fact that he is a friend often implies that you know him well enough to have grounds for believing that a good explanation exists. It is also probably true that the emotional and contractual commitments between you are stronger than between strangers so that you are more inclined to do what he asks even where it involves considerable difficulties for you. These factors are the basis for trust and for making it more of an obligation to obey somewhat questionable promises to friends than to strangers, in an imperfect world.

Similar considerations apply to the case of the judge who must decide whether to condemn to death a man he knows to be innocent when the alternative is certain to lead to the lynching of ten others, or to the start of a very bloody revolution. The inertial attitude here, analogous to the obedience and promise-keeping commitments in the previous cases, is the commitment to justice. It is clear that the utility of the adjudicatory branch of the law is sensitively dependent on the extent to which it applies the law without prejudice, e.g., recognizes the antecedent equality of the rights of the litigants. Any discovery that the law is not being applied justly undercuts the control of lawlessness by opening a loophole through which the criminal may (or may hope) to escape by bribery, the use of an eminent, titled, or Aryan front-man or the selection of Jewish or negro victims--in short, by exploiting whatever weakness the system of justice has turned out to possess.

Why are such preferences in the administration of the law weaknesses in a system of justice, granted that they are often illegal? Because of (i) the prima facie desirability that the law should be applied exactly as it is passed by the legislature, apart from any inconsistencies with previous legislation; since that is what the legislature intended and for which they presumably had good reasons and for which they have the authority; (ii) the desirability that the law not be held in contempt, as is a law whose application can be evaded by devices. These are separate considerations from those pertinent to the question whether the law itself is unjust. In morality as a whole, the importance of justice is chiefly that it is the procedural embodiment of the principle of equal rights and hence a keystone in the structure of applied morality.

The importance of justice makes it extremely desirable that it be administered by those to whom its importance is an intrinsic value, so that they will be prepared to disregard bribes, threats, and inconveniences. For them to do this requires no more than the moral commitment plus recognition of the necessity for justice in the application of morality. But we need them to go beyond the mere perception of their task as a derived obligation; the attainment of justice must become a commitment in itself for them. We do not employ or appoint them as legislators or moralists. For occasions will arise when their ordinary moral judgment will be that the ends of society will be best served if they act unjustly, and it is of great importance to the system that in the usual examples of such cases they should stand fast by their duty despite the advantages to others that appear to be gained by abandoning it. One might describe such examples as the moral mirror image of the selfishly rational but immoral act cases; here it is a man's unselfish motives that lead him to do other than he should. The need for an autonomous commitment to justice arises because the judges are not well-placed, entitled, or supposed to make the difficult long-run evaluation of the cost to the enormously valuable institution of justice of their aberration, and each of these shortcomings leads to bad consequences. This is not just to say they may err, though that is an important part of it. In a case described above, it is not in the least obvious that saving the ten who will be lynched by sacrificing the innocent man will guarantee a long-run gain, for the reaction to the mass lynching may be enough to arouse the society to the point of taking drastic action that will save more than ten lives in the future. Even in the case where a revolution will occur, it is not at all clear that the judge is in a position to be sure that is a long-run loss. Even if the long-run effects appeared most clearly good from this failure to do justice, it does not follow that men would be better served if in such circumstances all judges abandoned their commitment to justice. And that consideration enters since we are all concerned as to what attitude or values to recommend and adopt. Apart from the fact that judges will often be mistaken, if the practice of spot decisions on the apparent merits became the standard judicial practice, the calculations of miscreants would soon include this fact and could thereby make further inroads into the territory reclaimed by morality from our savage alter egos. Complex and expensive 'covers' could be arranged to deceive judges into making erroneous decisions on the spot, e.g., a kind of wild extrapolation of the present abuses of psychiatric testimony to induce sympathy in the particular judge. Worse, the deviations can become cumulative through the pressure from the thin end of the wedge. There may be excellent intrinsic grounds for making a single exception (more to be gained than lost), but if this is done once then the simple principle of justice requires that it be done for any like case. But if this is done for many 'like cases,' the law has effectively been changed and the new law may not be arguably better than the old in terms of consequences, because people now begin to act with a new baseline of illegality and the losses from this swamp the small gains from the merciful exception to the old law. Hence an attitude oriented solely to the best calculation of the consequences of particular acts, even on the basis of equal rights, cannot be generally encouraged, hence cannot be the best one for judges and thus for men in general, and hence cannot be the moral attitude.*

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*The categorical imperative and the generalization theses in ethics, and rule-utilitarianism, agree on this conclusion, but are either wrong or unclear about the reasons for it, or deny that there are or should be reasons for it. The bases for the commitment to the intrinsic value of justice (for example) include the peculiar equilibrium property of the principle of equal rights which implies the impropriety of discrimination; the impropriety of the obligation to justice; the social necessity and advantages of a common moral training; the practical importance of uniform procedures; the need for overshoot rules to achieve the indispensable minimum; and so on. There are rarely simple or single reasons for basic moral principles. But another weakness characteristic of the traditional utilitarian approaches, oversimplification apart, is the failure to see the difference between the best decision, calculating in terms of the consequences for all involved as they are at the time, and the best decision calculating in terms of that attitude which is itself determined as best by calculating in terms of the good of all who may be involved in such issues.

The moral attitude, we now see, must include those attitudes such as love of justice, truth and promises, which must be added to the basic other-valuing attitude by the discovery that the other-directed consequences of people having such attitudes are better than the consequences when people lack them (i.e., have only the other-valuing attitude). One might argue for amending the initial definition of morality to include reference to this complication, but it is just as satisfactory, and simpler, to see these other commitments as part of the consequences of moral commitment and hence as part of the moral commitment.

Thus the time for boldness in a judge is when he is threatened in the performance of his duty, not when he contemplates abandoning it. The inertia of his commitment should carry him far into the realms of personal doubt. It must indeed carry him far into the realm of personal certainty that more good consequences would result if he would act other than in the way which justice indicates. Yet he can be rationally sure that what he does in acting justly is right. We have argued this despite the fact that the judge's doubts will sometimes be justified and his action not productive of the best results; but we shall also argue that extreme cases exist where the obligation to justice, even by the judge, must be regarded as overthrown. Justice is not to be replaced by the judgment of the best action in terms of the presently determinable consequences, or even the actual consequences, but nevertheless justice is justifiable in terms of its role in the whole structure of morality, which is itself justified by its good consequences.

This apparent paradox has seemed to many philosophers to necessitate a commitment _either_ to justice (deontological theories) _or_ to justification in terms of consequences (utilitarian theories). But the two can certainly be connected (not combined), in the way indicated in the last footnote. How do we justify denying food to children between meals? By appealing to the fact that by refraining from food they now want, they will in the long run and overall enjoy their food more. No paradox for parents is involved; and for justice the case is analogous; not quite the same. The optimum system of moral attitudes, rules and practices requires a commitment to the just act at the expense of an alternative which would maximize benefits on a _particular_ occasion. Morality is an edifice whose superiority over enlightened self-interest springs from the mastery of a breakthrough in building principles, like the move to the arch which yields far greater strength by a process of developing two pathetically unstable drooping columns until they lock together on the keystone. The judge's temptation is like the temptation to span the half-completed arch with a straight beam; he thereby achieves a gain in strength which is not illusory, is entirely permanent--but less than optimal. It is with the rights of those not yet involved, as well as those who are, that we must be concerned in defining the moral act and attitude, and those not yet involved are better served by incorruptible justice, whether the corruption be from selfish or unselfish motives.

There are certainly cases where there is in one way no continuity of personnel or influences into the future; where, perhaps, the judge is deciding his last case before retiring or dying. But still the decision affects others, will itself be known, its inconsistency with the judge's past practice may be uncovered, etc., etc. Where all of these possibilities are conclusively excluded, one suspects the case becomes pretty unrealistic. But it simultaneously does approach the region where a commitment to justice should not supervene over simple other-directed calculations.

Where is the point at which we can justify injustice? Where is the point at which we can give reasons for acting unreasonably? The point is not marked on a mental roadmap. It is only certain that it lies far beyond the point where the immediately obvious considerations suggest it to the man without moral commitment, and well this side of the point where the whole system of morality would collapse. We have done little systematic thinking on these questions, being content to stand in awe as novelists, playwrights and philosophers ingeniously and tellingly present the poignancy of the dilemma or the excesses of the extremes. And armchair thinking is not enough; the answer must depend heavily on complex questions of fact about the effect of different inertia levels on societies and on subgroups of different kinds. We can only make an educated guess here, as in so many moral problems. The test question is indeed 'What would it be like if everyone in this position acted in this way?' but, of course, there are a dozen ways of describing or perceiving "this situation" and "this way" and the real difficulty is to decide which of these to stand on. But so it is with almost any practical problems today: the rules available won't do all the work. One can't choose a career or a wife except from a foundation of startling ignorance about the most important facts, and a set of rules all of which are known to be widely honored in the breach. Where choices must be made, the extent to which they are guesses is unimportant beside the extent to which intelligent analysis of the alternatives can improve the expectations of success. Improvement of the chance of being right from 1% to 3% is a larger gain than that from 50% to 99% in the sense that matters, for it triples one's chance of success rather than doubles it. The good side of extreme ignorance is that bigger improvements are possible, and rationality offers them.

So the present analysis yields an account which meets the objection that calculations of the consequences usually lead to abandoning justice in favor of expediency, without committing us to the view that justice is unsurpassedly important. (Similar arguments apply to duty, obligation, loyalty, etc.) Moreover, it does so without breaking the chain of arguments leading back to the individual, as do more formalistic theories. Defended and interpreted as above, the commitment to justice (by judge or layman, in their different degrees) is seen as defensible in the same way as, and as an extension of, the commitment to the value of others.

16. Evolutionary Ethics

A rational analysis of the consequences of the moral attitude thus leads to allotting a greater weight for justice than would a procedure of calculation of immediate consequences, even a guaranteed-accurate one. This valuation is in accordance with the instinctive morality of many cultures, a fact which calls for explanation. One may speculate that certain major features of morality, of which this is one, have sufficient advantage for the group that recognizes them to make such instinctive discriminations survival characteristics in the evolutionary process of a social creature such as man. This possibility suggests that we be constantly on the alert for instinctive reactions in the moral area for which no good reasons are explicitly recognized in case they are signs that more careful analysis will uncover an advantage for those who share them.

We may surely suppose that the maternal instinct, which is in one respect just a non-intelligentual special instance of the moral attitude, is a survival characteristic for those species in which it occurs. But the survival of the race (meaning interbreeding group), for which evolutionary processes select, is only a goal of morality insofar as it is moral to value posterity. At first, that seems an open option rather than a moral obligation. But, since humans commonly love or have obligations to their children and their children's future happiness usually involves the welfare of their children, there is an automatic commitment to the future of the race even if this was not in itself a matter of some pride and concern to many people, childless or not. Similarly, the childless are chained to children as other humans and thus to their future needs including the need for the comfort of their children. But the future generations are not the only point of morality. For a suddenly sterile race, morality still has much of its meaning and all of its force. They are indeed just people for whom there is no hereafter in any sense, and the absence of a racial hereafter is no more fatal to the point of morality, than the absence of a spiritual one. Analogously, the discovery of a pill that makes those who take it happy and content but sterile would, except for special circumstances, such as previous promises to bear children, provide a perfectly moral way of life for all of mankind.

We have been talking of what might be called 'evolutionary ethics,' but not in the sense in which it was construed to mean a justification for the exploitation of the weak by the strong. That crude theory attempted to make a value out of what happens often but not universally in the non-gregarious animals. Morality creates a higher value, in a non-trivial sense; it creates a very ingenious survival mechanism for individuals that transcends individual survival drives. The use of this distinguishes man from the animals at the level of efficient social behavior, just as his intellectual powers make that distinction possible at the levels of abstract thought and technological achievement. We have not yet progressed very far in the direction of making the functions and formulations of morality explicit objects of study in the way that led to such great success in the natural sciences and crafts. At the practical level this manifests itself in the extreme crudity of the present level of development of the machinery for international peace-keeping. Precisely the same problem presents itself here as led to the formulation of national legal codes, with the stakes substantially increased, i.e., the need to abrogate the right of individual violence in order to increase the chance of individual survival. But our failure to recognize the pragmatic basis for inter-personal morality makes the international problem appear as if it were wholly novel, and the short-sighted kind of discussion persists that characterizes a group of children squabbling over toys.

17. The Formulation and Interpretation of Moral Maxims

Even a casual study of man's perceptual and intellectual processes reveals that their operation is far too subtle to be described as the application of any rule formable in our present language, or indeed in any extension of it up to the limits on length imposed by the need to comprehend the rule. One can speak good English or play good bridge without being able to state the rules for doing so in a way that will ensure that someone following those rules would speak or play as well. Similarly, one may develop a remarkable sensitivity to the moral distinctions of a particular interpretation of morality without being able to state the rules of the system one may be thought of as applying implicitly. One of the main reasons for this is the enormous complexity of moral situations, i.e., the enormous number of morally different combinations of factors that can bear on many social situations. In areas of our experience where this kind of relevant complexity occurs it is still very useful to formulate approximations from which to work as a preliminary guide-line and this is the function of most moral rules. "Thou shalt not kill" is simply a starting point, like "Don't end sentences with a preposition" or "Don't trump your partner's ace." These can alternatively be expressed as "Killing (etc.) is wrong (or bad)". There are plenty of exceptions; but the exceptions have to be justified by special considerations. As we have previously remarked, the same analysis applies to the laws of physics. The General Gas Law is a useful approximation and can be appealed to as true (enough) for many purposes. For refinements, we add the van der Waal correction; and where that still yields insufficient precision, further corrections. Depending entirely on our needs for accuracy on a particular occasion, we may or may not have to make one or several further refinements. The first approximation is both mneomonically and communicatively handy.

The prima facie justification of the basic rule against killing is very simple--most people value their lives very highly and hence benefit from built-in protection for them in others' attitudes. Consideration of the advantages of radically altering this attitude towards their life shows no gains, chiefly because of the dependence of other advantages on ested in knowing about.

We produced twenty-eight 45-minute programs for teachers last summer, under Title IV of the Civil Rights Act, designed to go with curriculum projects that deal with the problems of racial and cultural diversity in the United States. We have done a number of films with McGraw-Hill that are designed for pre-service and in-service teacher education. I think video tape and films, accompanying the development of instructional materials in projects, can do a great deal to help the teacher cope with the ideas and materials that come out of the projects. Professor Fenton has produced some films about his project, which I think are very helpful to teachers. We have in the script stage at Educational Services Incorporated a film to introduce the "Subject to Citizen" theme of the junior high program.

In addition to producing materials to aid in teacher education, we have kept in close touch with state commissioners of education and superintendents of schools and classroom teachers in the nine Northeastern states that are close to our Center. Last fall, we invited a large group of teachers to participate in a two-day conference at which four directors of projects producing economics education materials at different grade levels explained their projects and their materials.

I think that when we try to communicate as project directors or as social scientists, we should have many teachers involved. We should also follow up to see if the conference is helpful to them in revising their curricula and taking account of some of the new things that are going on. I do want to emphasize that in the area of teacher education, there are many possible ways in which project people can help to get these materials and ideas directly into the classroom.

Hering: The big problem I see is finding people who are able to integrate and implement these materials. Our projects must concern themselves with this problem.

I am very pessimistic, having been a teacher very recently. I don't think that many teachers are equipped to deal with these ideas yet. I don't think the materials we are producing are really getting to the heart of the problem of helping teachers, especially in the elementary grades. I don't think we have the personnel that is needed to get our materials to teachers in an effective way.

English: In my work with the Educational Research Council of Greater Cleveland, I have been tremendously impressed by the fact that a movement from the schools has been generated, demanding improvement of the curriculum. This certainly makes life a lot easier for someone who is trying to improve it. We have thirty-odd school districts, all of whose superintendents are right behind the effort to improve the teaching of the whole curriculum, and they have persuaded a good percentage of their teachers to be just as enthusiastic. Perhaps we could get similar local councils in other parts of the United States to work in close cooperation with the teachers. It might solve some of the problems we have discussed. I would add, too, that we have tried many types of experiments in in-service education; we have the kind of teachers' guides that Professor Senesh spoke about, and we are trying to help the teachers in every way possible. We have summer sessions, classroom visitations, and at present we have a tele-lecture series that goes on every two weeks, in which we have about 5,000 teachers listening to talks by experts. The talks are followed by question-and-answer periods in which the teachers try very hard to put the speakers on the spot. I think we have generated a good deal of enthusiasm, and that this is the kind of local participation and enthusiasm that is essential for the changes for which we are hoping.

Shaver: One reason that curriculum projects have failed in the past to get into the schools is because of inadequate mechanisms for getting materials to people who would like to use them. There are several reasons for this failure. One is that some projects are reluctant to release their materials, or even information about their work, until everything is finished to perfection. Another is that funds are inadequate for new materials. Another is that there are too few opportunities for teachers to look at and learn about new materials.

In Salt Lake City, nineteen elementary schools are using Professor Senesh's materials with culturally deprived children, financed under Title I of Public Law 89-10. That is one way that materials can be made available. Other ways are needed, and perhaps publishers, project people and school people could all play a more active role.

Symmes: In our Developmental Economic Education Project, at the Joint Council on Economic Education, we have a large network of affiliated local councils for teacher education. We try to do a great amount of in-service education and, at the same time, build curriculum materials. We are working for kindergarten through grade 12.

One of the things that I have found satisfying in this conference, and what I have seen lacking in the economics education program, is the presence of teachers or college professors of economics who have an understanding of the structure of the discipline of economics and can communicate it. What we need to do is to get a definition of the structures of each of the disciplines that can be communicated to the teachers. This has not been done, and I see the Consortium as an organization that could do it.

The other thing needed is to design a new structure of social studies--to create a new discipline. Some people, Alfred Kuhn, for example, are attempting to do this.[1] What we need to communicate is the structure of the disciplines, and then teachers can start to teach, because the bits and pieces will have something to hook onto.

Arbital: We have had a curriculum revision program going on for some time now. There is an entire district in New York, as well as schools in other districts, using the Professor Senesh Grade 1 and 2 materials. We have also been using the Lincoln Filene material, the Educational Services Incorporated material, and the New York State proposals, and our own. In response to a position paper last year on revision in grades K-12, we had 17,500 replies from teachers. Teachers from all levels responded, from kindergarten through twelfth grade, and they indicated what they liked and disliked about the present curriculum. I disagree with those who think the teachers are not ready for change--they are quite high. They are dissatisfied with what they have been doing, and they want change. When they are given opportunities to experiment with new materials, they do quite well.

We are getting a lot of feedback from 130 schools using our own materials, which are rather loosely organized. In the feedback we expected people to say, "I like this." "I don't like this." "Throw this out." "Add this." This isn't what we are getting; we are getting materials that teachers themselves are developing in the classroom, as a response to our materials. They are sending us lesson plans and asking that they be evaluated. We are finding that many of our teachers are active and creative and innovative at this moment.

Silverman: In a county that prizes reading and arithmetic in the elementary grades, I have found a devious method for getting new social studies into the curriculum. This is by choosing materials that are readable, and interesting to children, and that contain some of the bigger ideas that we wish to get across. I would submit to you people in the projects that you not only prepare good teachers' materials, but that you also get people started writing things that children will enjoy reading; and that you also educate your teachers along with the children. One reason that people in Miami were eager to get Professor Senesh's material is that is is usable by children.

Senesh: I would like to close with three points. First, I am sorry that we did not pick up the question of evaluation. I do hope that this subject can be discussed later; I think it is very important. I would like to know what the innovator's relationship is to the whole evaluation process. Second, I want to clarify something that was said about chronology. I think what was meant was that the usual approach to chronology should be revitalized so that historical sense develops for the children, so that when you say 1776, or any other date, more than one event comes to mind and the whole historical period opens up. The idea of time-sense should be used instead of the conventional one of chronology. Third, I firmly believe that people who are teaching knowledge are not neglecting the behavioral objectives. We feel strongly that the basic emphasis on knowledge in our society helps make the individual a better participant and leads to appreciation of our political and economic system.

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[1] See Alfred Kuhn, The Study of Society: A Unified Approach (Homewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin and the Dorsey Press, 1963).

CHAPTER 8

CONCEPTS, STRUCTURE AND LEARNING

Irving Sigel
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Designing the Curriculum to Fit the Consumer

I thought I would respond to a number of things which happened today. First, I am surprised to find we spent most of the day discussing curricula without paying attention to our consumer--the child. If it were not for the child, we would have no job. Therefore, when we talk about a curriculum, we must raise the question, Where does the child fit in? How, in fact, do we relate the fancy structural concepts of a discipline to this developing organism who is different in kindergarten from what he is in the twelfth grade--not only by virtue of having been exposed to a curriculum, but also through the influence of society outside the school?

The whole discussion about values I found most interesting because it ignored the fact that the child comes to school not as a *tabula rasa* but as an individual who has a number of predispositions to respond to and select stimuli. To assume that the school has such significant effects on values, without taking into account the influence and possible conflict that can arise between home and school, seems presumptious.

As a developmental psychologist, my point is that there are at least two major considerations in planning curricula. One is the developing nature of the child, both cognitive and effective. The other is that he does come to school from an environment which has already had tremendous impact on his way of thinking, reasoning, and feeling. If we look upon social science in this way, I would say that there are at least five categories of outcomes or goals that must be kept in sight.

The Goals of the Curriculum

First, there are certain *behavioral* outcomes which are actions and intentions. That is, it is reasonable to expect some changes in behavior as a result of input. Second, there should be a *knowledge* change. The rate and amount of this knowledge change will always depend on the child's actual and potential attainment. Next, there are values and beliefs that should emerge, not necessarily through the teachers' explicit behavior but implicity, because children use adults as models. The fourth goal concerns motivation. This must not be confused with behavior. The kinds of motivation which should be the outcome of a curriculum are interest, persistence, and concern.

Finally, a problem-solving strategy should evolve. The child must develop a way of knowing how to go about solving problems. Problems can be viewed as conflict-laden situations, and solutions must be rendered which lead to the resolution of problems. Solving problems in the social sciences is more difficult than in the physical sciences, since solutions are not so clear-cut. Our solutions are tentative, subject to change. This puts problem-solving in the social science disciplines in a place that is unique. One has to learn to tolerate ambiguity in the social sciences. A striking example might be that of taking children to see a city council in action. They might see continual disagreement, no solution to problems, and only tentative or partial completion of tasks. Five years from now they may still see similar wrangles over poverty, housing, etc. Yet the students need to acquire perspective here. So you see, the strategy that children must learn is how to handle conflict situations, how to tolerate partial solutions, and what expectations to have. The curriculum must provide a strategy for dealing with such problems.

You may not agree with these goals. For me, a successful social science curriculum will provide the necessary knowledge upon which to make decisions, a set of problem skills to aid in attacking a problem, and the awareness that all solutions are true only until proven wrong. We can only hold our "truths" temporarily. They are dated.

Shaping the Curriculum to the Needs of the Educational System

The second area to which I would like to address myself is the context in which these curriculum changes are taking place. What are the ingredients of this microcosm we call education? Important variables are the teacher, the child, the social structure in which the teacher and child are interacting, and the atmosphere in the classroom. With regard to the teacher, we must clearly see her role as a member of a complex hierarchical society. No matter how innovative she wants to be, and no matter how fancy the curriculum, her success is in part determined by the attitude of the administration. If she has a principal uncommitted to innovation, that teacher will likely not innovate. Alternatively, if you can't get the teacher involved in curriculum development with real career enthusiasm, the fancy curriculum will still go unused. If the teacher is committed, it is reasonable to question such variables as competence in teaching, the strategy the teacher can employ in implementing any curriculum, and the flexibility shown in moving beyond the tight curriculum bonds.

In addition, there is the school organization to consider. Teachers have to function in this social structure and it may be pertinent to ask whether the curricula can really be used in the various kinds of school organizations. For example, if a non-graded school is involved, can the curriculum be applied? What about the relationship between grades in a graded school?--how much chance is there for continuity? How much autonomy does the teacher have in dealing with curriculum matters? What is the place of social science in the total program? Also, what teaching aids are to be used to elaborate the teaching: visual materials, laboratories, experiences, and trips? This still leaves the question of how these experiences fit into a total picture. Seen in this light, the selecting and structuring of information appears as another basic problem.

Lastly and crucial is the child himself. I wish to discuss him as a cognitive being, using Piaget's ideas on cognitive development.[1] One basic assumption is that intellectual growth is sequential and irreversible. The child moves in a pattern of development from what one might call a sensory-motor, action-oriented point very early in life, to the point where he becomes a logical, thinking adult. The mental skills that the child acquires at one stage are not necessarily fixed at that stage forever. In other words, there is constant reorganization, and development of new skills. The best illustration I can think of is the way we study causality. I rub two objects together and create heat. Here is a kind of simple cause and effect relationship which we can discuss in Grade One. In graduate school we can read philosophical texts on causality, still dealing with the same problem which now is a complex set of issues. As the child acquires these kinds of skills he achieves a certain equilibrium, then acquires new information which requires reorganization of his cognitive structures, and goes on again. According to Piaget there is a constant process of assimilation and accomodation, which in effect is the acquisition of new information and reorganization of one's posture toward problems and issues as a result of this new accomplishment.

We take the position that the child is ready for certain things when he can perform the prerequisite intellectual operations. For example, in the geography curriculum presented by Professor McNee: in order to handle the material the child has to understand multiple causality, probability, the concept of space and the concept of time. If this curriculum is due to begin in the tenth grade, then it is probably suitable. Similarly, in the history curriculum presented by Professor Fenton, it is necessary for the child to be able to look at the same event from different viewpoints, picking out salient features, either by observation or inference, and ending up with a set of integrated understandings of a complex historical event. Readiness, then, is a function of operations that the child is already able to perform, and he is ready provided he has acquired the prerequisite skills for new experiences.

Cognitive Acquisitions Necessary for Understanding the Social Sciences

I am going to suggest a number of the cognitive acquisitions which seem most relevant to the social sciences. One is the *ability to think in terms of natural causes*--to see how an event is determined by other specific events. For instance, if you behead a king, there are certain outcomes which are different from the outcomes of just putting him in jail or not doing anything. Here the child needs to be able to conceive a variety of types of causes. A second cognitive requirement is the ability to think *probabilistically*. Children, especially under the age of seven, tend to think in absolute terms about causation and the future; but to work in the social sciences it is necessary to be able to make probabilistic inferences.

The ability to classify and to group things in hierarchical structures or relational structures is another important cognitive acquisition. To do this the child has to be aware that every object, person, and event has multiple characteristics; this poses the problem, Do we classify on the basis of one, two, three or more criteria? From this decision emerges a sequence of hierarchies, depending on the child's ability to coordinate the properties. This is a very complex task, but we can teach classification if we are sensitive to its complexity. The ability does emerge without direct intervention, but as interveners and educational planners it is our duty to be aware of the possibility of including appropriate experiences to facilitate the child's acquisition of classification skills. In a number of studies, we have been able to teach five-year-olds to classify objects in a multiple way, and to construct new groups by addition (e.g., forming a group in which the blocks are red _or_ round) and by multiplication (e.g., forming a group in which the blocks are red _and_ round). These operations are similar to the set theory children are now studying in the "new math," experience which should have some influence on how they are able to deal with social science materials.

Last in this group is _the ability to understand conservation_, the principle that objects retain certain characteristics in spite of transformation in role, appearance or space. Conservation is often illustrated by Piaget's experiment with two balls of clay identical in shape and quantity. One ball is transformed into a sausage or a pancake. The child is asked if each ball contains the same quantity even though the shape differs. There seems to be a definite stage when a child realizes the balls of clay are equal in quantity even though the shape differs. He conserves the essence in spite of transformation. The idea that an object maintains its identity in the face of transformation is a complex yet crucial concept.

Our research shows that a child understands conservation only if he understands three principles. One is multiple classification, already discussed. Another requires the child to be aware of potential disparity between what he sees and what is in fact true. Children shift from being literal, bound by the observable, to the ability to make inferences. Two one-half pint containers may vary in shape, but still hold the same amount of liquid. To grasp this requires comprehending that what is perceived is not necessarily true; it is also necessary to understand that changes in one dimension can create changes in another, an application of the principle of compensation. The third ability required to understand conservation is what Piaget calls reversibility. The child must understand that the ball of clay, after being transformed into a pancake, can be molded into a ball again, with the original quantity of clay intact. Conservation is a relevant principle for social science; the fact that a person maintains an invariant role in the face of social transformations, for example, is relevant to political science.

Given the four cognitive acquisitions just described, the child is ready to start thinking in formal terms: to generalize and construct hypotheses on the basis of observations, to make deductions from hypotheses, and to test the deductions and modify hypotheses on the basis of further observations.

Implications for Curriculum Planners

I have not spelled out a full theory of curriculum development, and I do not think this can be done at the present time, when only the most causal acquaintanceship exists between curriculum developers and we child developmentalists. Nevertheless, I think I have suggested more than enough substance to keep curriculum workers busy for a while.

Let me confine these remarks on curriculum planning to the subject of classification, which may seem to many an unimportant matter that can be handled in a few days, if it deserves a place at all. I shall suggest a sequential development, beginning with the simplest tasks and ending with thought processes that are rather complex.

1. Classify a group of objects into a few classes; for example, a group of blocks into round and angular; or into red, green and blue; or into yellow, blue and other.

2. Classify a group of objects into two groups, then subclassify each of the groups into two groups; for example, classify a group of foods into fruit and sandwiches, then subclassify the fruit into apples and oranges and the sandwiches into jelly and cheese.

3. Merge several groups of objects into larger groups on the basis of a new classification; for example, red, green, yellow, and plain blocks into dark-colored and light-colored groups; or robins, cardinals, cats and dogs into winged and four-footed animals.

4. Classify a group of objects on the basis of two characteristics for each group; for example, a group of blocks into red-round, red-square, green-round and green-square.

5. Using the four groupings of item 4 above, form alternative (i.e., not simultaneous) groups that are red-or-round, red-or-square, green-or-round and green-or-square. These examples represent logical addition.

6. Again, using the four groupings of item 4 above, form alternative groupings that are red-and-round, red-and-square, green-and-round and green-and-square. These examples represent logical multiplication.

At each stage of the sequence suggested above, the application can be expanded in each of two dimensions. First, a larger number of categories can be used; this will enlarge the child's familiarity with and ability to handle the basic concepts. Second, and much more important, other types of objects or instances can be used: instead of blocks, food and animals, we can use personality characteristics (for example, happy, sad, irritable, demanding), group situations (harmonious, tense, unfamiliar), historical episodes (wars, revolutions, territorial expansion) and social problems (depressions, graft, juvenile delinguency). It is possible to construct an indefinite number of such illustrations, because of the simple but crucial fact that all objects or instances in any class have many attributes. It should be clear from these suggestions that a very broad range of important and difficult things can be manipulated within the framework of classification problems. Perhaps less clear is the fact that the applications suggested are leading toward an understanding of probability and causality in social phenomena.

Summary

The educational system should be directed toward the accomplishment of a number of interrelated goals: toward modifying and developing the child's behavior, knowledge, values, motivation, and problem-solving ability. Curriculum planners, teachers and administrators must all be aware of certain characteristics of children and of child development, if they are to be successful.

If we think of planning an educational program for a particular child, beginning at a particular time, we must take full account of the experiences he has had up to that time. He is not a tabula rasa, even at the age of five or four or three. But neither is the pace and sequence of his development fixed for all time, even at the age of eight or ten or twelve. Drawing on the theories of Piaget, we have argued that there is a certain necessary sequence, but not timing, of development.

In his early stages, the child is sensory-bound, action-oriented and literal-minded. His development into an adult capable of the inferential, hypothetical-deductive thinking required for analysis in the social sciences must follow a certain sequence. Specifically, he must learn to think in terms of natural causes, to think probabilistically, to perform simple and multiple classification, and to understand conservation.

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[1] These ideas are presented with more detail in Irving Sigel, "The Attainment of Concepts," in M. L. Hoffman, and L. W. Hoffman, eds., Review of Child Development Research, (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1964), I.

CHAPTER 9

ROUND TABLE: THE NEED FOR CRITERIA, RATIONALE AND PERSPECTIVE IN CURRICULUM REFORM

Morrissett: We are now half-way through the conference, and it is time to take stock. How far have we moved toward our goals? Are there any important things we should be talking about that we have omitted? Are we wasting our time discussing the wrong things?

I have asked three participants to comment on these particular questions.

Senn: We can see where we are by referring to the conference goals. Happily, we have achieved some of them. "The exchange of ideas about approaches taken to social science content in the new curricula," given as the main purpose of the conference, has occurred most pleasantly.

There are, however, some doubts that much has been said that will contribute to the improvement of the social studies curriculum, another of our goals. We have had the benefit of several brilliant individual solutions to certain aspects of structure and content in the social studies curriculum. But precisely because they were individual, I am afraid they will not be useful for dealing with the real difficulties of social study content on a nationwide basis--even assuming educational pluralism. Two things are needed. One is a set of criteria for making educational choices from among the variety of approaches offered. The other is a way to translate the theories, generalizations, and insights we have heard into educational practice and reality. Just what improvements are to be made and how they are to come about remain important questions for us to discuss. Let me illustrate these points by way of a few comments.

It has been said that most of American education consists of teaching children answers to questions they didn't ask. Fenton and others suggest that we reform and teach children to ask questions they didn't ask before. Perhaps this is a step in the right direction, but answers are important too. Even if children learn to ask some of the right questions, they can't ask all of them. We have to teach some questions as well as answers, but which ones?

There has been little explicit discussion of models of curriculum reform. I am concerned about the implicit assumption that the appropriate models for implementing curriculum reform are the same in the social studies as in other major areas of curriculum reform--in the biological sciences, mathematics, and language arts, for example. I do not think that the model of curriculum reform that has worked in these other fields is applicable to the social studies. One reason for thinking this is that there are many more social studies teachers than there are mathematics, French or biology teachers. Another reason is that social studies teachers are not as well trained in their own fields as are teachers in those other fields. The nationwide assumption that the mathematical, language, and science models of reform will apply for the social studies is not realistic.

I also urge you not to forget that children deserve a childhood. Even if Bruner is right in saying that any subject can be taught in some form at any grade level, all the specialists cannot be honored. When will we discuss the question of priorities, and just how much of a child's time should be spent in study at different ages?

There are two other conditions that will handicap improvement in the social studies, even if we can find reasonably workable ways to deal with structure, content and method. Unless we pay much more attention to teacher training it will not matter much what we do to improve social studies in other fields. Not quite so pressing, but extraordinarily vexing, are the backward policies of the U. S. Office of Education. Although it has spent millions of dollars in the field of social studies, a sizeable fraction of this amount must have been wasted by a difficult and obscure grant-making process that takes up far too much time of good men. But this is not all. An obscurely simple-minded policy about copyrights on work produced with grant funds, combined with a failure to enforce dissemination of results of grants, has resulted in both wasteful duplication of efforts, and in reluctance of good men to work in the field.

Of course, I do not think that the Conference can deal with all of these issues, but we should consider them as we think about what we are going to do next.

John Stuart Mill defined an art as the best arrangement for putting the truths of science into practice. I think education is an art in this sense. The social studies are overwhelmed with truths from social science. We have got to devote ourselves to finding the best arrangement of the truths that Senesh, McNee, Fenton and others are giving us, in order to perfect the art of social studies education.

Berlak: The greatest need in a conference of this sort, and in our curriculum-making efforts in general, is for very clear statements of the rationale of the various curriculum positions. We need to know the assumptions, the philosophical underpinnings, the objectives, and the rationale of the plans for reaching these objectives, for each set of curriculum materials.

There has been a reaction against listings of objectives and goals, just as there has been a reaction against preoccupation with process. This reaction has occurred because the statements of objectives have been stereotyped, and not accompanied by complete descriptions of the whole rationale of the curricula. The whole set of educational decisions related to constructing a curriculum and putting it into practice needs to be spelled out.

There are three very good reasons why a clear statement of the total rationale of a curriculum is needed. The first is that clarity about goals is essential for the construction of good materials. The second is that a clear rationale is a great help in making evaluation instruments. The third is that the adoption decisions of schools can be sound only if those who make the decisions have good knowledge about the rationale of the curriculum materials.

We have had a long and fruitful history of discussion about the goals and priorities of education, going back at least to Plato. Plato had some clear ideas about the goals of education: the principal goal was to prepare leaders to rule. He specified the relevant content: for example, children were to learn about the gods at an early age. And he had some ideas about process: for example, children were not to use the method of inquiry when studying about the gods.

In the social studies, in the twentieth century, my favorite statement of educational aims is that of Charles. Beard, in the 1930's.[1] Beard established the essential priorities, with proper concern for the disciplines, the child, the learning process, and so on. He did not build a curriculum, which probably was not his intention, but he asked the right questions and laid a sound foundation for curriculum work.

It is up to those of us who are developing curriculum materials to make very clear to potential users exactly what is in the curriculum packages we produce. If we do not do that, we put an impossible burden on the schools, requiring that they try to divine from our materials alone all of the basic assumptions, educational theory and hoped-for objectives that we have built into them. For the most part, they will lack the resources to perform this detective work; and if they are able to do it, it is wasteful, duplicative effort.

This is a plea for more abstract thought, more theoretical dialogue, about the basic assumptions, purposes and procedures of our curriculum efforts. What happens in the classroom is important, and the materials are important; but there is a danger of concentrating too much on these end products of curriculum efforts, at the expense of sound rationales for the difficult processes that must precede the construction and classroom use of curriculum materials.

Taba: In order to put the conference into a broader perspective, I want to look at the whole breadth of the educational enterprise. In making all the various kinds of educational decisions, big and small, there are six kinds of considerations that must be taken into account. These are:

1. Content, which is the subject of this conference.

2. Objectives, which include, in addition to knowledge, patterns of thinking, of values and feelings, and of skills; these, too, have structures, which have developmental sequences that must be followed.
3. Learning processes, which also have developmental sequences that must be recognized.
4. Types of learners: high or low ability, rich or poor cultural opportunities, rural or urban backgrounds, and so forth.
5. Teachers and their teaching strategies. Social science is particularly difficult for teachers to master and teach, because it is a federation of subjects rather than a single subject.
6. The school as an institution, which presents both opportunities and limitations that must be recognized in planning implementation and dissemination.

We should recognize the importance and complexity of all of these facets of the educational enterprise, before we put too much of our energy into developing any one of them, such as the structure of content.

We have had a number of changes in educational emphasis in the past thirty years, in most cases going to extremes. The Eight-Year Study was a protest against stale methods of rote learning of subject matter, and pointed the way to better methods of learning content. Then there were protests that too little consideration was being given to the child and the learning process; content was practically abandoned, in favor of an emphasis on process, which accomplished little because too little was known about learning theory. Since Sputnik, people interested in content have come into the field, and have ignored the learning process.

There has been a curtain between the "educationists" and the content people. The educators have worked on content, constantly rediscovering what the content people already know; and the content people have investigated learning processes, oblivious to many things the educators already know. The two groups have not only ignored each other's knowledge; there has also been hostile criticism and rivalry.

As federal support for curriculum development has grown in the past few years, I have hoped that the "process" people and the "content" people would get together and strike a profitable and fruitful balance. If they do, I am sure that we can accomplish in eight years what is now done in twelve, without any pressure on the children.

The Social Science Education Consortium looks like the best effort I have seen so far to bring the content and process people together. It is in a strategic position to accomplish a task that has not yet been achieved in American education, that of bringing a balance and an integration that has not yet existed between content and process. In this Conference, most attention has gone to content. I would like to see other conferences which give the same close examination to the learning process, to the school as an institution, and to each of the other facets of the educational enterprise.

Morrissett: Professor Senn has raised several questions about criteria for making educational choices, and Professor Berlak has pointed to the need for clear statements of the rationales for various positions on curriculum reform. Professor Taba has discussed the need for closer relationships between the methods and concepts people, thus putting the Conference in a broader perspective. Are there additional comments?

Content and the Learner

Saylor: I disagree with Professor Taba's analysis. I think that the primary emphasis today in the new curriculum projects is on the learner. We have not decreased the emphasis on the learner, we have just put more emphasis on the content. We are using better judgment about what kind of content we ought to have for the learners we have. I think that Senesh and Fenton, as well as Project English, and the PSSC Physics course are giving much more consideration to the learner than the old content ever did.

Fenton: I am afraid that I disagree. I have traveled around and talked with people in different projects. At the start, many of them think that they are producing materials for all students of all grade levels. They are not thinking about the different abilities of students, or the social class from which they come, or their predispositions for individual work, or of the sort of career the child is going to have. They are saying that these students ought to know something about whatever content the curriculum developers have brought with them from a formal university setting. I am sure that they are concerned with learners, but the amount of time that is spent worrying about the differences among learners in most of the projects seems to be quite small as compared to the quantity of time devoted to putting particular content into the material.

Saylor: My comment was a comparative one, I mean as compared to the 1930's and the 1940's.

Payette: I heard a statement recently that highlighted my reaction to the comment. Someone mentioned that we are not only interested in giving the students the right to think in the classroom, but also in giving them the right to feel. In my observations of where the new project materials are being used, I have not seen evidence of much concern about the nature of the interaction between teachers and students and among students themselves. The emphasis seems to be more on the learning of ideas. There is not much emphasis on the learner's behavior, feelings, and values.

Saylor: How much was there in the old American History course?

McNee: Some of the history of the High School Geography Project is relevant to this discussion. The first step in our project was to have a number of college people sit down and try to define what the important ideas of geography are. We did not go immediately then to making finished materials. The next step was an experimental one. We selected ten classroom teachers and ten college professors. Each professor was teamed with a teacher, and the teacher was encouraged to experiment with the ideas of geography. The participating schools were picked from a variety of situations with respect to income level, geographic location, and so forth. We accumulated a large file of experimental results that came directly from the classroom. This procedure was very enlightening and creative; it showed that there were many ideas that could be introduced with success in ths sixth grade, which most people had previously assumed could be dealt with only at the Ph.D. level. Success in introducing advanced concepts into the elementary grades depended on having very clear ideas about what they were, and on finding ways of making the concepts exciting to the students.

From the start, our project has been very much concerned with what goes on in the classrooms, with working closely with teachers, and with the nature of the pupil.

Rueff: I have worked very closely with Professor Senesh and his program for over two years. We have been very much aware of the different types of children we have in our schools, of the fact that we have slow learners, gifted, socially deprived, urban and rural children and so forth. The problems posed by such varying circumstances are met by providing a great variety of resources in the materials so that the teacher, who has to make the final decisions, has the materials available to meet a wide range of needs.

Curriculum Projects and the Classroom Teacher

Miller: We have talked about the problem of bringing "content" and "process" people together, and of integrating all of the facets of the educational enterprise described by Professor Taba. In this discussion, I have had the feeling that the classroom teacher has been underestimated. The final integration of all the thinking about subject matter and objectives and learning processes and so on must take place in the classroom. It sounds as though the psychologists and social scientists and all the other experts here are going to get together to prepare materials to be sent to the schools. Then the teacher goes to her mailbox, finds the materials, and is informed about what she is going to do this year.

In our school system, we teachers are constantly involved in learning about learning processes, in looking at new curriculum developments, in assessing the needs of our own school, and in putting all these things together to improve the education of our children. I think more teachers should be involved in such processes. We should not have everybody throwing materials at us and saying, "This is what we have done for you; go teach it."

Searle: Professor Berlak was talking about the difficulties of determining objectives and priorities for our educational system. Even if the experts can agree on these matters, they may be overlooking the very important fact that they are not the people who make the decisions. They don't own the educational enterprise; they work for it.

Berlak: That is exactly why I have made such a strong plea for curriculum developers to clarify their assumptions and values and objectives, their whole rationale--so that teachers and those who make the curriculum decisions will have a better basis upon which to make their decisions.

Silverman: I have been thinking about the great benefits that many teachers would get from these discussions, and wondering how this kind of conference could be undertaken at the local level. I hope that in our county we can make some beginning on activities of this kind. I am sure we can use some guidelines from national projects, but we have to work out at the local level what we think our children ought to have.

Lerner: I see many kinds of school systems, and in most of them there are no opportunities to sit around and carry on the kind of inquiry discussion about curriculum theory and developments that we are having here. Many classroom teachers go home at 3 o'clock to their second job. Miss Miller and Miss Silverman are talking about school systems that want to work with and are able to work with, the ideas we are talking about here; but these are not typical school systems. What we need very much is a system in which bold and imaginative curriculum materials are produced by outstanding people and in which teachers are also involved in a dialogue about the methods and ideas of the materials. I know that it sounds like a contradiction in terms, to first prepare materials and then to somehow get teachers involved with them; but that is a problem that somehow must be solved. Some of the new materials do present challenges and alternatives in which teachers can become involved, and the presentation of clear rationales for curriculum materials, for which Professor Berlak has been pleading, can help to get teachers intellectually stimulated, and involved in selecting and using materials in a creative and flexible way.

Searle: I agree very much that it is important to get teachers involved in a stimulating intellectual process, if the new curriculum efforts are going to make creative changes. I think this is what Miss Miller and Miss Silverman meant when they said that somehow we have to find ways to give teachers the benefit of the great sums of money that have been spent on the new curriculum materials, while at the same time giving them the opportunity to make their own decisions and to meet the needs of their own classroom.

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[1] Beard, C. A., The Nature of the Social Sciences in Relation to Objectives of Instruction (New York: C. Scribners' Sons, 1932).

[2] The Unique Function of Education in American Democracy (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, Educational Policies Commission, 1937).

CHAPTER 10

ANTHROPOLOGY IN THE HIGH SCHOOLS: THE REPRESENTATION OF A DISCIPLINE

Robert Hanvey
Anthropology Curriculum Study Project

Let me begin by admitting to a progressive inability to speak in very general terms about the process of designing curriculum materials. I am too close to the confusing details. A few years ago I would have been much more willing to make pronouncements, predictions and recommendations. Now, I think that the best service I can provide will be to give you a glimpse of the inside details of one project operation as it attempts to represent with integrity one of the social sciences. I can see only a few patterns in these details; perhaps you will see others.

The process of representing, interpreting and translating a discipline is only partly an intellectual one. The intellectual component is intricately linked to other components--some political, some ecological, and some happenstance. Our project is probably an anomaly in this respect because I understand that some projects have elegantly comprehended the crucial ideas of a discipline and marched ahead with clear vision and sure foot to develop appropriate materials. While I admire and envy such people, at the same time I wonder if they can really be that fortunate. In our case, we haven't marched ahead with a perfectly clear sense of direction. Indeed, we have fallen flat on our faces a number of times!

For example, we developed a unit called "The Emergence of Civilization," for use in World History courses. The intent was to have the students do what archeologists have been trying to do: first, to compare six original instances when societies transited from hunting and gathering to urban forms. Second, to look for regularities in this process of culture change. The material didn't work. The data were not right; the schools didn't understand what we had in mind, and they became preoccupied with a lot of side issues. The teachers and students alike were enthusiastic about the unit, partly because it did represent improvement. But when we asked them their view of its central purpose, they just didn't know--from our point of view. So we revised that unit twice, and we are revising it a third time, rather drastically.

In this instance, we did not start with the selection of key concepts, or with a definite notion of the structure of the discipline. We started with opportunity; someone wanted to write materials on the topic. The schools were not demanding it, and it was not an imperative of the discipline.

In the case of other materials and units, the interest of a prospective author has sometimes preceded, sometimes followed project decisions. Primarily, we look for topics (not concepts) that seem to have some legitimate place in history programs. There is a practical reason for this. The biology and math people can replace old courses with new, but anthropology is not taught in high schools. We decided that we must insinuate materials into history programs. Call it subversion, if you will: federally financed subversion! But we think the topics are legitimate and, more importantly, contribute some general understanding of the functions and processes of culture.

Culture as a Concept

What about "culture" as a concept? It could be argued that this is, in fact, the structure of the discipline: 1) it is an idea that encourages the search for regularity, because it is concerned with a set of probabilities about human behavior; and 2) it is an all-embracing abstraction and thus encapsulates the work made of the anthropologist, who tends to be concerned with the whole society.

What did we do with this concept? First of all, we didn't do what the schools wanted. We developed a unit on human evolution, "An introduction to Human History." (In the second year, we got braver and called it, "The Study of Early Man.")

We try to teach in this unit something about the function of culture. This is not really what the schools expect. They want ethnography, descriptions of primitive peoples. We wanted to stress culture as the distinctively human form of adaptation, the crucial factor in human evolution. So this was one aspect of our treatment of "culture." There are others.

Area Studies

We have three area studies, on Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa, each representing a different consideration of culture. In Latin America, for example, we study Iberian culture transplanted into a new setting, noting, for example, the very pervasive, patron-client relationship in economics, religion, and political affairs.

In the Middle East, we consider the idea of a mosiac of cultures, from tribal to national, and the problem of a traditional culture moving toward modernization.

In the African material, the emphasis is on the organization of a tribal society and on the impact of nationhood on such a culture. Here we use the case history of one group--the Nupe of Nigeria.

Problems in Defining and Teaching Culture Concepts

What are the results of such indirect approaches to the culture concept? What do students learn? First of all, they do not learn neat definitions. None of these materials contains an exact definition of culture. What the students seem to acquire is the ability to make operational definitions. But I must admit that they are extraordinarily awkward definitions. We don't yet know how properly to evaluate this--whether it is useful to achieve awkward but operational rather than clear but rote definitions.

One of our units does explicitly attempt to teach two key ideas, which are concepts that serve as tools. One is that of pattern and the other is that of function. Students consider a particular primitive group, the Kwakiutl, learning how pattern and function are applied to the analysis of this society. Residence, social stratification and values are studied in the light of the concepts of pattern and function. Then, the same ideas are applied to an historical society, classical Greece. We hope that the students, having learned to use these concepts in the analysis of a primitive group and a classical society, can then make meaningful applications to any society.

One of our problems is there are three different views of what anthropology is about: the views of the teachers, the views of professional anthropologists, and the views of the curriculum projects. Our large volume of correspondence indicates that almost all teachers are looking for something rather idealistic. They hope that anthropology will help students to "understand" and "accept" other cultures. When we talk to anthropologists about this major interest of teachers, they are not much interested. Understanding and accepting in the sense of respecting other cultures is so built-in that they cannot imagine wasting time talking about it. They want to understand culture in theoretical terms, and that is quite a different thing from what the teachers want.

In the project, we have not accepted the teachers' objective as our main task, but we have not always accepted the scholars' outlook either. We have, for example, been taken to task by some anthropologists who say we have not properly demonstrated that anthropology is a generalizing science; but when we ask them to suggest some generalizations, little is offered that is useful. Nevertheless, we are making a little progress in finding generalizations that we think are useful in the curriculum.

The Anthropology Profession and the Schools

In many respects, we have to adjust to the ecology of the profession. We have to adjust to the ideas and resources that are available, and we can ourselves have only a limited impact on them. As far as possible, we have thoroughly exploited the resources of the profession. We have used the tools that are available, and the scholars that are available. It is difficult, however, to find enough top-notch scholars to work with us. There are only about one thousand American anthropologists; many of them are not available; they are busy, or out of the country, or not particularly interested in curriculum work.

Our project must face in two directions. It must try to represent the discipline of anthropology with integrity; it must also try to represent, in a very different sense, the schools. It must be sensitive to what the schools require and to what kinds of materials they can use.

In our position between the schools and the professional anthropologists, we can sometimes play a useful intermediary role, meeting the needs of schools on a selective basis. In one instance, we responded to the request of teachers that we try to make anthropology more directly relevant to current issues. We were in touch with two anthropologists who are particularly interested in peasant societies. We found their work could be applied to the problems of today's developing nations and we are working to introduce certain of their ideas into our unit, "The Great Transformation," and into the three area studies.

Summary

We have learned much from our experience. We have learned that, between purely random behavior and thoroughly planned and controlled behavior, there are levels where vague notions, hunches, "ecology" and accidents guide one's behavior. The products of early experience are most humble, and often erroneous and expensive. But the mistakes are a part of the "discovery process" for project people. Naivete is gradually replaced by some measure of sophistication. Slowly a clear sense of direction, purposes, and the capacity to achieve them, emerge.

CHAPTER 11

POLITICAL SCIENCE AS A STRUCTURE FOR A SOCIAL SCIENCE CURRICULUM

Nona Plessner and Joseph Featherstone
Educational Services Incorporated

Aims of the Curriculum

We want to show you part of the social studies curriculum E.S.I. is preparing for junior high school. Although we plan three courses, roughly approximating 7th, 8th and 9th grades, today we only want to talk about portions of an 8th grade course. The purpose of today's presentation is quite narrow and specific: we want to give you as concrete an idea as possible of how this material works in classrooms. We feel that rationalizations and concepts are important, but we also feel that any discussion of them should not be divorced from actual classroom material. We hope that this demonstration will push this conference towards considering all curriculum ideas in their classroom context: as seenarios for enactments between the child and the material.

The aim of our junior high school course is to understand the development in America of a distinctive political culture. When we say political culture we mean politics in the broadest possible sense, a seamless web which includes religion, economics, and social and intellectual change, and which must be studied through a wide variety of disciplines.

The units of the course are thematic, and each is a variation of the theme of the emerging political culture. While the themes are determined, the child's general interpretations of their meanings are not. It is important to stress that, beyond a point of factual and thematic comprehension, this material is open-ended. In a sense, the evolution of a political culture is the evolution of a national character. Each child, as he elicits history from the materials of this course, will have to develop his own assessment of the American character. He will have to do this in a disciplined way: he will have to square his interpretation with the rules of induction, logic, historical evidence, and common sense. Fortunately, it is quite impossible to separate the child's concern with the political culture of this course from his own concerns as an American today.

The curriculum materials and exercises are selected with the purpose of getting the children involved in, and excited about, the process of making generalizations from the interesting data of political history. The emphasis is more on developing the students' intellectual abilities than on retention and recall. The materials are presented in ways which give children opportunities to discover regularities and uniformities in the social world around them, and to recognize causality. The development of these skills should enable them to categorize other social phenomena, in other places, at other times.

So far the E.S.I. curriculum is a "roughly coherent but highly flexible framework within which we can construct model materials."[1] The use of the two major concepts, power and political culture, has been defended on the ground that adolescence is a critical period in the stabilization of an American child's political development. Evidence also suggests that school is the most important formal agency of political socialization.[2]

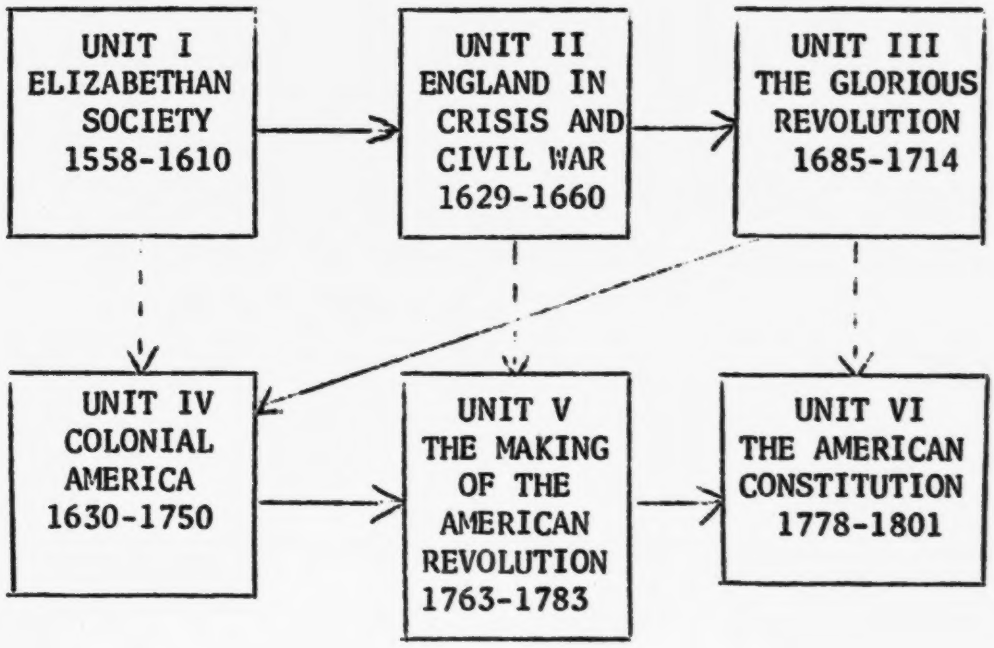
A Clearer Look at Course Two--From Subject to Citizen

The pivotal course in the three year sequence has as its theme, From Subject to Citizen, and is intended for use in the eighth grade or thereabouts. The course draws its material from seventeenth and eighteenth century British and American experience. Its limits in historical time are the reign of Elizabeth I on one hand and the accession of Jefferson to the American presidency on the other--roughly from 1588 to 1801. It is not a narrative account of what happened; rather, it is a series of six studies in depth, or units, dealing with major developments and critical episodes in the emergence of a changed political culture in the two centuries.

The organization of units in From Subject to Citizen is reflected in the following diagram. Units, if taught in full, may vary from six to eight weeks in length.

We eschew the fetish of coverage and the obsession with humbles of isolated facts. Our units present studies in depth. The material is as authentic as possible and is presented in a thematic way, to provide room for "guided discovery." The course is focused on people; we feel that this is probably a much better way of learning citizenship than learning generalizations by rote

UNIT SEQUENCE IN FROM SUBJECT TO CITIZEN


UNIT I
ELIZABETHAN SOCIETY
1558-1610
UNIT II
ENGLAND IN CRISIS AND CIVIL WAR
1629-1660
UNIT III
THE GLORIOUS REVOLUTION
1685-1714
UNIT IV
COLONIAL AMERICA
1630-1750
UNIT V
THE MAKING OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION
1763-1783
UNIT VI
THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION
1778-1801

from a teacher. Generalizations and the ability to generalize figure importantly in this course, but they are not an end in themselves. The actual generalizations are not as important to us as the process of generalizing the child learns to apply within the framework of our themes. In this sense, the goals of this course might be stated behaviorally. That we have not done so is in part because we are reluctant to separate goals from the actual classroom curriculum material; and because we feel our themes are, on their own merits, vital for American children today.

The Colonial Unit--"The Emergence of the American"

We have chosen to work from Unit IV, the Colonial Unit or "The Emergence of the American," which is the most advanced in preparation and testing. A provisional version of this unit, probably best used in the 8th grade, has been published, and we both have had experience in teaching it. During the summer of 1965, we trained teachers to use the course, and it is now being tried in selected states.

One word about the materials of this unit. They are printed in pamphlets, to give the teacher more flexibility in presenting them. Each pamphlet contains copies of maps, documents, charts and photographs, together with outlines of discussions and student guides. It is intended that they be dispensable student-owned materials.

The Colonial Unit takes its theme from a question asked by a French observer of the colonial American scene, Hector St. John de Crevecoeur. He asked, "What, then, is the American, this new man?", and suggested how he thought the American differed from his European counterpart. His question provides the thematic structure of the Colonial Unit. It is not raised immediately with the children who study this material. Rather it is used as a way to organize some notions of the American national character after students have encountered evidence of how Europeans might be changed by their contact with the New World.

Geography and the American

In the Colonial Unit, the first piece of evidence the child is given is a 1719 map with parts of the world incomplete. The mapmaker indicates that the continent we now know as America might be the ancient island of Atlantis. To some Englishmen, this might have spelled Utopia. An English playwrite contrasted England and America thus: "I can tell thee for as much red copper and I can bring up, I have thrice the weight in gold. . . All the chains with which they chain up their streets are massy gold and all the prisoners they take are fettered in gold, and for rubies and diamonds, they go forth on holidays to gether them by the seashore to hang on their children's coats and stick in their caps." To balance this view, the children have materials from Richard Hakluyt, John White and the Virginia company. Hakluyt, for instance, wanted Queen Elizabeth to establish American colonies to open a new woolen market. John White, with his Planters Plea, persuaded thousands to emigrate, for the enlargement of Christ's kingdom, while the Virginia Company called for blacksmiths, carpenters and practical people who could really make the enterprise work. The children sift these materials to find their own answers to questions such as "Why did people come to the new world?" "Why might people have wanted to leave England?" "What motivated Englishmen to establish colonies here?"

We then ask the question, "If you were going to establish a colony in America, what other information would you like to have?" The general response to this is, "information from someone who has been there." To supply this requirement, there are copies of John Smith's description of Virginia from his History of the World and his description (with Fraces Higginson) of New England. This is where geography comes into its own, for these descriptions show vividly the interest and usefulness of geography. The children must identify the pictures and decide which is of Virginia and which of New England. They also draw a map of Virginia based on John Smith's description.

Next, they are asked to consider, "Where would be the best place on the Atlantic seaboard to place a colony?" "How will Englishmen respond to the climate?" "What use will they make of resources?" "How can a colony be organized?" "How will the land be divided?" Finally, they use the material they have been evaluating to plan their own colony, showing how the land is going to be used and indicating lines of communication.

Community Studies and American Character

Part II of the Colonial Unit is a case study of the settlement of a New England town, Sudbury. It suggests a definition of the American character, by contrast with the ways of the Old World. It fits into the theme of "From Subject to Citizen" in a specific way because the settlers of the town tried to reproduce an English Medieval village, and their failure suggests the outlines of the emerging American character. Discovering why the attempt was unsuccessful also gives the children more insight into problems of social class, class conflict and cultural change.

First, it is necessary to show the main features of the Medieval economy, and its related social structure. This is done with maps, charts, documents, and occasionally some natration. Then, the Sudbury story continues by tracing in detail the life of Peter Noyes. Records of the time are used to follow his journey from Wayhill in England to Watertown, Massachusetts, until he finally settled in Sudbury. Noyes was one of the petitioners entrusted by the Massachusetts General Court to distribute the land grant to Sudbury. This was attempted on the open field system and an interesting ranking of the settlers occurred. The children discuss the basis of the ranking and try to find reasons why, for instance, the miller should rank third when the land was shared, and the minister first.

An interesting anecdote provided the basis for further sociological discussion. It tells how a master who had been forced to sell his cattle to pay his servant considers dismissing him. The servant is impertinent enough to suggest that he give him his cattle in payment. The master then poses the question of what will happen when all the cattle are gone, to which the servant swiftly replies, "You then shall serve me, so that you can have your cattle back again."

Similar problems surround a discussion of George Washington. An attempt is made to break down the myths that surround him, first by viewing Washington as a planter in the South. His problems as a planter, and many of the cultural differences of the South, are brought out. The children are presented with the anomaly of his attitude toward slavery. He wanted his own slaves to be treated well, and yet wrote to friends in Philadelphia saying he didn't think runaway slaves should be able to find sanctuary with the Quakers. The children learn that Washington planned to free his slaves at his death, and someone is certain to raise the question, "Why not before?"

A similar complexity in social organization is illustrated by the autobiography of Gustavus Vassa, a Negro whose life began in a slave-owning family in Africa. After being brought to America as a slave, he managed to escape to England, and wrote on the abolition of slavery, all the while accepting complacently that his father owned slaves in Africa. Here are some real enigmas for the children to fathom.

Economics and the New Man

As another example of how the E.S.I. curriculum ties in with other social science disciplines, we will take a brief look at the game "Empire." The game is set in the late 1730's. The school class is divided into six different teams--the New England merchants, the Colonial farmers, the Southern Planters, the Virginia Planters, the London Merchants and the European Merchants. A large map is the gameboard and each team has ships and boxes of cargo representative of its geographical area. The goal of the game is to increase wealth while keeping within the trading rules of the Empire. The economic problems involved are many, for no manufactured goods can come from European merchants and the colonies cannot sell to Europe except through London. There are other contingencies, too, such as interference by customs officials, pirates, and storms at sea, to further complicate the trading. But there may also be good sailing. The purpose of the game is to help the children learn about the mercantilist theory followed by the English at this time, and understand what it meant to American colonists.

Politics and the New Man

The concluding piece of this unit, "Why did the Colonial Assemblies come to clash with Royal Governors?" focuses on how the American is emerging as a political animal different from his English forebears. When students see the attitude which Americans take toward Royal governors they must try to square these actions with "Why?" What gives the American such strong feelings that government should be used for his and by him? Here students can go back to the pattern seen in Sudbury and in the Virginia settlements--the pattern of Americans setting up towns, deciding how land was to be used, and how much each settler was to receive--and consider whether it was contempt for governmental authority or familiarity bred by long participation in their own affairs that led Americans to clash with royal authority.

Conclusion

As yet, the full E.S.I. curriculum for social studies has hardly passed the embryo stage, though many units are nearing completion. Experiments are being tried to find materials and methods which best suit our purposes. We hope that education will be encouraged by this attempt to raise the level of political socialization in America, while improving the standard of history teaching in the schools.

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[1] Franklin K. Patterson, Man and Politics, Occasional Paper No. 4 in The Social Studies Curriculum Program (Cambridge, Mass.: Educational Services Incorporated, 1965), p. 58. This booklet gives the background, rationale and description of the program on which Miss Plessner and Mr. Featherstone based their presentation at the conference.

[2] Ibid., pp. 16-17.

CHAPTER 12

ROUND TABLE: INQUIRY AND EVALUATION

Senesh: I think the E.S.I. Project is truly very exciting, for two reasons. First, I find an answer to a very important problem history teachers are facing in the elementary and secondary schools, and even in college. This is, how do you develop a certain historical sense? How do you get a three-dimensional picture of a period? At present, children learn historical data for a test and then forget it. Historical dimensions just don't exist, not only in the elementary schools, but in the colleges; except, occasionally, through historical novels. I think the rationale, wanting to make the child experience the way a historian works, is not important. What is important and exciting is that the period studied suddenly becomes more than dry data and events. I wish we could have testing and evaluation methods that would measure occurrences like that.

Second, it is one of the finest examples I have seen in which history is used as a container for the other social science disciplines. The curriculum gives a very good place to economics and political science and sociology; those disciplines add much to the historical presentation. (I do not want to make the historians mad by suggesting that history is nothing but a summation of the individual social sciences. There is more to history than that, I am convinced, though I don't know what that something more is.)

Inquiry

Marker: I got the impression that you people at E.S.I. have in mind clear answers to many questions that students ask, such as, "Why was the minister in Sudbury ranked first?" I have just visited the Anthropology Curriculum Study Project, where I have been impressed by the fact that they don't have any answers at all. The professionals are not even sure what the ancient stone tools were used for. I get the impression that you might be fishing for answers--preconceived answers--with some of these materials, and in that sense, your curriculum is very closed rather than open.

Featherstone: I think not. In some specific matters, such as, Who ranked first? We certainly do know the answers; there is only one answer. But the significance of why this ranking system was established is something that I think children can answer in many different ways. To give you an example, the whole Sudbury story could be viewed, and some children have viewed it, as a triumph of individuals over a kind of medieval, corporate way of life. Individuals broke forth to own their own land, and to defy their "betters" for the first time. Other children have pointed out--another valid interpretation of the same facts--that it is in a way very sad, because the individualistic order that emerges doesn't have the same community feeling; it doesn't have the same respect for religion; it doesn't have a lot of other things. The children's interpretations of the emerging American character, which is what this unit is about, can be exceedingly different. The question of which of these character sketches really strikes you as being most American is the kind of thing we ask them to answer. This is, to say the least, subject to interpretation.

Lerner: I am concerned with the nature and the rationale of building inquiry processes. The idea of process is presented as being vital to the teaching of history; for example, getting the children to act like historians. I am not sure, now that the rationale has been spelled out, to what extent that is a good way of teaching history, or whether it is more desirable than knowing the history. The extent to which children are really supposed to make their own discoveries is often neglected in the discussion of rationale.

Now the E.S.I. data are screened in advance; all the diaries are relevant; all the documents are pertinent. At last year's sociology convention, it was seriously debated: Should we give children a lot of data and let them figure out which are relevant or should we pre-sort relevant data, and let them do what they can with what is pertinent? This is the kind of argument I would like to see more of, to get to the basic rationale. What is it you want the children to do and why?

Plessner: I feel, and this is a personal opinion, that anytime you give a child anything you have pre-screened it. You have certain reasons for using this textbook or that piece of material. I think if it is the process that you are after, then you can prestructure material, make a judgment about it and say it is worthwhile for the children to look at it this way. We don't know the answer to all these questions. I don't know whether it is better to give other data or to give it in a different way. All I am saying is that any time you give a child anything, you have prejudged it.

Testing

Senn: What difference in test results have you got between this presentation and the conventional type?

Plessner: That is another one of our unanswered questions. We are trying to develop tests to determine just exactly what happens in the children's minds. We have gone to E.T.S. (Educational Testing Service) for their advice, and worked with them to develop testing instruments. We feel a little bit unhappy, and I think E.T.S. does too, with the kind of test that they have evolved. At the same time, we are talking to other people devising different measuring instruments based on classroom observations. It is certainly incumbent upon us to develop measurements.

Featherstone: One of the things we are doing illustrates how we think previous and present testing is inadequate. We are thinking of doing a test unit which lasts a week. It would be a study of immigrants, say 19th and 20th century immigrants to this country, and would consist of variations on themes developed in the course. That is, the children would have to transfer to the 19th and 20th centuries their theories about the differences between Europeans and Americans in the 18th century. We could do this in a community study, lasting a week. The test itself would be a way of educating as well as evaluating.

Sigel: I don't understand E.T.S. and I don't understand those here who say that they don't know how to evaluate their curricula. We teach the children processes of induction, hypothesis testing and theorizing, and somehow we expect them to do what we ourselves are unable to do with what we give them. Since we are, by our own admission, so inept at evaluating, and since we are teaching children how to assess evidence, establish methodologies, and so forth, I propose that we hire these children who have been through our courses as evaluators for the courses.

Rationale

Fenton: I am curious about your rationale. It begins with a statement that American history courses found in the eighth grade are poor. I certainly agree with you, and we want to teach better ones. You propose to do this by using the idea of "Subject to Citizen" to bring about better political socilization. But the well-known studies of Hess and Easton[1] argue that political socialization of the child is well on its way to being finished by the eighth grade, so that if you do want to get at political socialization, you'd better do it pretty early in the elementary school. You also made the assumption that if you want to work with political socialization the best way to do it is by studying content in the 17th and 18th centuries. I don't know what evidence anyone could give that this is the best way. The evidence I have run across seems to indicate that it is quite a poor way, and I feel E.S.I. is left with a rationale that just doesn't hold together. Finally, you propose to test political socialization by a week's project on immigrants in the 19th century. It seems to me that E.S.I. simply must sit down and develop a clear and concise rationale for what it is doing. I hasten to add that Carnegie Tech had better do this too.

Taba: I want to comment on the methodology of getting at curriculum innovation. Yesterday, we had methodologies that started with schemes of concepts and generalizations, worked out with packages of materials rather than pieces of materials. Today we have had two presentations that are a kind of English method: mess it through and look again, and mess it through and look again. Both have merits. I suggest that at future meetings, we raise the question of what is the proper place of the inductive approach as compared with a structured approach. Where can the two eventually meet? I am not assuming any of us has an ideal scheme. We ought to examine thoroughly both approaches, and users of both approaches ought to figure out very carefully an appropriate way of evaluating their particular methods.

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[1] Robert Hess and David Easton, "Role of the Elementary School in Political Socialization," School Review, Autumn, 1962, pp. 257-265.

CHAPTER 13

VALUES AND THE SOCIAL STUDIES

James Shaver
Utah State University

I am convinced that much of our difficulty in discussions about the social studies curriculum is attributable to ambiguities in our use of language. Apparent disagreement seems real, and we fail to come to grips with the issues because we have different referents for the same words or use different words to refer to the same thing.

Social Science and Social Studies

I would like to define _social studies_, distinguishing the social studies from the _social sciences_; it is an important distinction. The _social sciences_ are the scholarly areas concerned with the study of man in his social environment. Social studies is that aspect of the curriculum which is ordinarily based on the social sciences and history as a source of content, and intended as _general education_.

Social science teaching means the communication of the findings of the scholarly study, and of its philosophy and methods of investigation. For social studies teaching, there is an intervening phase of determining a rationale for general education, an intervening phase which social science instruction does not face. Note that you might teach social science _or_ social studies in secondary or elementary school. The social science course (I include history here, in agreement with Professor Feigl's definition) is taught, or should be taught, with regard for the structures of the discipline; social studies courses should be taught with regard for the demands of general education. Frequently, general education in social studies has been taken to mean citizenship education. In terms of the practical results of selecting content and teaching procedures, we may come up with similar results, whether our concern is social science or social studies instruction. But I want to make clear that my concern here is with values in the _social studies_ curriculum.

Evaluations and Value Judgments

I also want to make a distinction between making evaluations or evaluating and making value judgments. Evaluating, or making evaluations, means determining whether certain criteria are met. It is basically an empirical process. It includes, for example, the scientist's comparison of data against the standards of investigation; or, at a higher conceptual level, deciding whether a hypothesis is to be accepted or rejected at a given level of probability. The second, that is, making value judgments, is a matter of deciding what the criteria should be; that is, of deciding what is right, or what is important.

Some people, for example those in the pragmatic school of thought, act as if all value questions were of the first sort, that is, of the evaluating type, involving only testing against criteria. To these people, the value problem is one of testing the consequences of an act or policy to decide whether it is right or not. There remains, however, the problem of deciding what criteria the act or policy will be tested against. I maintain, as Professor Figel also pointed out, that there is no empirical procedure for such decisions unless a value or values are assumed.

The Harvard Curriculum Project

Much of what I am going to talk about has arisen out of my association with Donald W. Oliver at Harvard.[1] In the Harvard Curriculum work, we have viewed the critical task of general education in the social studies as citizenship education. And, relying upon assumptions and notions about democracy--whether in the "pure" form of the town meeting government that was so frustrating to me when I lived in New England, or in the form of a republic--we have been concerned that the general education curriculum prepare the student to make reflective, rational, "critical" decisions about public issues.

What is involved in making reflective, rational decisions about public issues? We identified, in an arbitrary division of reality, three basic types of problems to be faced in a discussion in which a decision about a public issue is to be made. Each calls, we think, for a somewhat different intellectual strategy, although all are interrelated.

One of the problems is clarifying communication. In the past, propaganda analysis has been one aspect of this, but the approach has been much too limited. Teaching students to clarify communication should involve not only alerting them to recognize breakdowns in communication, but also use of the findings of semantics and linguistics--for example, on the way that symbols shape our thoughts, on symbol-referent relationships, on changes in symbol meanings that take place over time as well as from one place to another in space, and on the value loadings of language and their effects on behavior.

The most appropriate strategy for handling the communication problem when it involves disagreement over the meaning of a word is simply to find some way of agreeing how the word is being or should be used. Too often in public schools we have taught or implied that the solution to this particular problem is to find out what the real meaning of the word is. Of course, there is no real meaning to a word. The basis of language is consensus as to how a symbol relates to a concept about reality. We can call an object a table or we could refer to it just as well as a chair.

A second type of problem, which involves a different kind of strategy for solution, is determining matters of fact. Making evaluations falls in this category. In education, the emphasis in teaching students to handle factual as well as other types of problems has been on Dewey's five steps of "scientific" problem analysis. Certainly scientific methods are relevant for solving factual problems. It is interesting, however, that even with stated commitments to teaching thought processes, most of the social science projects have tended to focus on substantive concepts. Despite its absence from the usual history course, historiography is especially applicable to citizenship education because, in making decisions involving public issues, we usually have to deal with reports, very rarely having an opportunity to be a first-hand observer. For instance, we contemplate the Viet Nam situation using information that filters through to us from the government via the news media.

I include avoiding logical errors as a subcategory of the factual problem. Logic in dealing with public issues usually has to do with the way in which we construe factual realities, that is, what we think is out there around us. Here the methods of the historian and the scientist, especially as formalized by philosophers, are particularly relevant.

The third general type of problem, and the one of central importance to our discussions, is making value judgments. Gunnar Myrdal, the Swedish economist and sociologist, noted how important this problem-type is in our society, as evidenced by the title of his classic work on the position of the Negro in the American community, An American Dilemma.[2]

A main point of Myrdal's was that our general values tend to conflict with our specific values. For example, a man may be committed to the idea of the dignity of man, but in a specific situation act to deny this general commitment by not allowing Negroes to eat with whites. A person might believe that all men have an equal right to earn a living, but deny Negroes or Jews or non-Mormons or members of some other group the opportunity to work in his business.

As well as conflict between general and specific values, there is also conflict between and among our general values, and this is the more important kind in the political-ethical discourse of citizenship education. A classic conflict that is probably overworked is that between freedom and security. You expand people's freedom and the security of some is threatened; you expand on security and you restrict freedom. Other examples of conflict between general values come readily from the current civil rights dispute. You could defend recent civil rights legislation in terms of equal opportunity for Negroes. On the other hand, and I think we have failed to appreciate this, Southerners and others opposed to the legislation have not used Fascist values to support their position; they use values generally accepted in our society, such as property rights, the right to local control, and freedom of association. These are good American values! And there is real disagreement over which should prevail in specific situations.

In many instances, then, we cannot agree upon the value to be used as the criterion for judging a policy. This is true if both sides claim that theirs is a final value and there is not agreement on a third, higher value, or if each disputant claims that his value is an essential ingredient of human dignity--which many people agree is the highest value of all in our society--and you cannot deny his value without denying human dignity.

Values, Empiricism, and the Social Sciences

What is the role of social science in these value disputes? If you are willing to accept my position that value conflict is a legitimate and important problem area in making decisions about public issues, and that teaching students to deal with value conflicts should be an important aspect of the general education program, then it is necessary to ask whether a curriculum based on the social sciences can be sufficient for general education.

Certainly the social sciences can identify the values held by the society or by subgroups in the society. They may even help to explain why we hold our values. But what role can the social sciences play in resolving confrontations between values? Charles Beard, writing in response to this question, made a classic statement in his book, The Nature of the Social Sciences:

> Now we come to the second question raised by tensions and changes in society: What choices should be made in contingencies? Here the social sciences, working as descriptive sciences with existing and becoming reality, face, unequivocally, ideas of value and choice--argumentative systems of social philosophy based upon conceptions of desirable changes in the social order. At this occurrence empiricism breaks down absolutely. It is impossible to discover by the fact-finding operation whether this or that change is desirable. Empiricism may disclose within limits, whether a proposed change is possible, or to what extent it is possible, and the realities that condition its eventuation, but, given the possibility or a degree of possibility, empiricism has no way of evaluating a value without positing value or setting up a frame of value.[3]

In other words, ultimately, you must have a criterion by which to judge policy, and there is no way empirically to establish this.

Professor Feigl, if I interpreted him correctly, is in agreement with Beard. Charles Stevens, John Hospers, E. C. Ewing, Bertrand Russell[4] are others who have agreed with this basic conception of the limited role of science in the ethical decision-making process, even though they do not necessarily agree on the best way to make ethical judgments.

To reiterate, social science can contribute to the clarification of value conflicts by describing what the society's values are. Scientific method also is helpful in resolving value disagreements that rest on factual assumptions. For example, proving that his assumptions are false may lead a person to modify or abandon a value position. A person may also abandon a value, that is, make a different value judgment, if it can be proved that a policy based on that value will lead to consequences that are objectionable in terms of a second value. Also, when a third higher value is agreed upon by the protagonists, then the methods of the scientist (which can not posit the third value) can be used to predict whether a policy decision based on one value or the other will better enhance this superordinate value. But if there is a fundamental political-ethical conflict, that is if the disputants cannot agree on which is the most important value, scientific method cannot resolve the disagreement.

The student should be helped to clarify his values, to be sure that he understands what his values are and how they are relevant to public policies, and to develop some strategies for weighing those values in making decisions about which public policy he would like to pursue or have the government pursue. If there is any one area in curriculum where creative work is needed, this is it. There are people working on ethical analysis, but very little of their effort has actually been applied to what we might call political-ethical analysis, the ethical analysis involved in broad public issues.

Teaching Strategies for Values

Imaginative strategies that go beyond the empirical methods of science are needed. In the Harvard Project, we used hypothetical cases, and tried to train students to use them, to clarify value positions. For instance, the teacher might describe a freedom of speech case to his students:

> A man is up on a soap box giving a fiery harangue. A crowd begins to gather, and the police who are present are faced with a decision. It looks like there may be violence; what should they do? Should they disband the crowd or try to hold them back, or should they pull the fellow down from the soap box and haul him to jail?

This is a familiar American dilemma, and students come up with different solutions based on differing, and usually unexamined, commitments. Hypothetical cases can be used to clarify these positions. Similar situations can be constructed along a contiuum, at one end of which freedom of speech seems to be extremely important relative to property damage, and at the other end of which property rights are dominant. Considering such a spectrum of hypothetical cases, the range of analogies and the differing decisions that might be made, can help a student determine what decision he wants to support in a specific situation.

In our teaching, we often presented cases from points along the continuum, as counter-cases to the student's position. Hypothetical cases afford a way of getting students to see that the values do conflict, and how they conflict, and of helping them determine at which point the nature of the situation has changed sufficiently so that they are willing to shift from supporting one value to supporting one or more others being violated. This emphasis upon important conflicting values sometimes caused students to shift positions. Note that this is a personal decision. The teacher obviously cannot tell the student where he should shift. To the teacher, freedom of speech may be the most important thing in the world, and he would rather have people killed than have it taken away. To the student, human life may be much more important, so that he would give away freedom of speech to insure that human life was not taken.

Our use of cases has been based to some extent on what is known about what people do when they become aware of inconsistencies. Myrdal points out in the Appendix to An American Dilemma, and Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance[5] is based on, our tendency to forget, to repress, to push out of our consciousness our inconsistencies. Cases and counter-cases help to force the student to deal with the full array of values and the conflicts among them. But that is enough time on teaching strategy, as that is not the purpose of this conference.

Using the Structure of Disciplines

What I have said to this point should provide some thoughts about the place of values in the social studies curriculum and the resultant role of social science concepts in that curriculum. To recapitulate, I have tried to deal with the topic by looking at the social studies as general education and, specifically, at the citizenship function of general education. Obviously, there are other possible functions of citizenship education and I am not suggesting this as the only one. But in making decisions about public issues we get involved both in evaluating--that is, matching things up against criteria--and in making value judgments, that is, deciding what the criteria should be. The latter choices are central to public controversy, and to helping students develop reflective strategies for making political-ethical decisions. Given this central position of value judgments, empiricism's lack of capacity to posit values suggests that, while the concept of the structure of a discipline may well be an appropriate basis for determining what should be taught in a social science course, it is not adequate as the basis for the social studies curriculum.

Courses in the social sciences based on an analysis of structure in the various fields of study which we call disciplines may well be an appropriate part of the social studies curriculum, of course. The social sciences do have much to contribute in terms of the intellectual methods and the data for describing public issues and the context within which decisions about them must be made. Formally, logically, the idea of presenting concepts in the context of the structure of a discipline is powerful, especially to social scientists who have commitments to the work to which they have dedicated a very large portion of their lives.

The major structural questions often asked of a social science discipline may also be appropriate in shaping a "structure" of citizenship education. But the answers are going to be different. For example, Schwab[6] deals with three major kinds of questions in defining structure: What is the subject field of the discipline? What are the substantive concepts? What are the syntactical or methodological concepts? We can ask the same sort of questions about citizenship education. In the rationale which I have been discussing, the subject or field is thinking reflectively about policy decisions in our society. The substantive concepts are those which are useful in describing and understanding the issues in the context in which decisions about them must be made. Here the social sciences have obvious application. The syntactical or methodological concepts are those useful in arriving at rationally justified concepts. Here the social sciences are relevant, but other sources of concepts are not only relevant; they are critical.

But what of the motivational power of presenting social science concepts as part of a structure of the discipline? Let us leave aside for now the question of the reality of the structure of a discipline, the outcome of man's arbitrary efforts to define and study a field, and his analysis of the results of that study. It is one thing to have faith that there is order in nature, including society as the natural setting in which man operates; it is another thing to presume that the dividing of reality into segments for study, the basis of a discipline, necessarily reflects that natural order. Leaving that aside, there is still an open empirical question as to whether the concepts of the social sciences can be taught most effectively as part of a total course based on structure, whether they are best taught in thin relationship to understanding societal problems, or whether a combination of the two methods is most effective.

It does seem possible that the scientist's belief about the motivational effects of studying concepts in a context of structure are too much a reflection of his own excitement at creating structure. We do know that students tend to learn better that which can be related to and used in their own framework for viewing and construing reality. As Professor Sigel has pointed out, we too often ignore the fact that students come to the classroom with their own conceptual and affective frameworks. Teaching is not a matter of simply painting something on a _tabula_ _rasa_; it is a matter of interaction between what we want the students to learn and what they have brought to the classroom. We cannot, for example, impose strategies of thought that seem best for handling the three major types of problems involved in political-ethical discourse. The task is to help the student to develop intellectual strategies of maximal appropriateness, recognizing that the student's frame of reference will have an impact and that the strategies will undergo change as he attempts to use them in his own life.

Inculcation of Values

What of the affective, as opposed to the intellectual, side of values in the social studies curriculum? I am not suggesting that we should inculcate values; I am not suggesting that we should not, either. Although some value judgments are at least implicit in what I have been saying--for example, the commitment to a rational, reflective mode of persuasion--the instructional intent is to help students develop concepts useful in identifying and clarifying their values and implications of their values. At the same time, my position assumes commitment to the basic societal norms that structure our debates on policy. These norms are acquired largely outside of the school, although the elementary school and to some extent the secondary school can play an important role in sharpening and reinforcing commitments to norms. As social studies curriculum people, we should not blush to impress on students the importance of these societal values, perhaps stressing human dignity as the basic commitment--with other central values, such as freedom of speech, defining the characteristics of dignity.

In emphasizing the importance of particular values, we must help the student keep in mind the inevitability of conflict between the values. We may, for example, stress a representative majority-type of decision-making process as a value derived as a natural extension of a commitment to the basically rational nature of man. To this value we should juxtapose another value that is extremely important in our society, expressed by such people as Thoreau and currently under fire across the nation: the right to individual belief and to dissent.

Conclusion

There are a number of other matters that could be discussed, related to the approach to values I have described: materials and teaching strategies, intereactions of these materials and teaching strategies with students who have different personality characteristics, the grade level at which this approach might be introduced, the kind of sequence that might be followed, and the kinds of evaluation problems that one gets into with such a curricular approach. However, these items are outside the scope of this conference. I would simply like to close, then, by emphasizing again that values and, in particular, value judgments must be a central concern of the social studies and this must take us beyond the social sciences as a source of concepts for the curriculum.

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[1] See, for example, Donald W. Oliver and James P. Shaver, Teaching Public Issues in the High School (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966).

[2] New York: Harper & Row, 1944.

[3] Charles Beard, The Nature of the Social Sciences (New York: Scribner, 1934), pp. 171-172.

[4] Charles L. Stevenson, Ethics and Language (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944), pp. 113-114; John Hospers, An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1953), p. 494; E. C. Ewing, "Subjectivism and Naturalism in Ethics," in Readings in Ethical Theory, edited by W. E. Sellers and John Hospers (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1952), p. 120; Bertrand Russell, "The Elements of Ethics," in Sellers and Hospers, ibid., p. 8.

[5] Leon Festinger, A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance (New York: Harper & Row, 1957).

[6] Joseph J. Schwab, "The Concept of the Structure of a Discipline," Educational Record, July, 1962, pp. 197-205. Also, Joseph J. Schwab, "Structure of the Disciplines: Meanings and Significances," in The Structure of Knowledge and the Curriculum, edited by G. W. Ford and Lawrence Pugno (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1964), pp. 6-30.

CHAPTER 14

VALUES IN THE CURRICULUM

Michael Scriven

Introduction

I want to argue for two points, both of which seem to me vital to the whole question of dealing with values in the curriculum, and both of which are almost completely at odds with common views about this problem. The first point is that the vast majority of value disputes are capable of settlement by rational arguments. The common slogan that "one person's values are as good as another's" is usually false and is usually an indication of insufficient training in empirical investigation or logical analysis.

The second point is that the analysis and resolution of value disputes is one of the most difficult intellectual problems that we ever put in front of the child in the course of the entire curriculum. A tremendous job lies ahead of us in developing methods and materials to teach teachers and children how to deal with this complex matter.

The Place of Ultimate Values

In disputes about what is "right," what is "better," and what "ought" to be done, the discussion frequently ends with the disputants in disagreement about the issue, but in agreement that the argument cannot be carried further. A common conclusion is that You can't dispute basic values." Let us use the common term "ultimate values" to refer to these values that are unarguable, in the sense that no further facts or logic can be mustered to show whether they are sound or unsound.

It is possible that there is no such thing as an ultimate value. One of the best philosophers in the country once said that he had never, in the course of any debate on any moral issue, found a disputant who could not be shown, at every point, to be appealing to yet further considerations of fact or logic. The stopping-point of value-disputes, then, is very often a point of disagreement about a complex matter of fact, such as the actual effects of pornography on grade schoolers, and not a dispute about ultimate values at all.

The question of whether ultimate values exist is not very important, however, if it is true, as I believe, that the great majority of value disputes can be settled by empirical investigation and logical analysis. The educational task is to push back the frontiers of analysis as far as possible, not to worry about whether there is a last frontier. There is an interesting analogy in the physical sciences. The status of determinism need not be settled before we agree that the right approach is to seek for causes of all phenomena with all our effort.

Education About Values Versus Indoctrination in Values

It follows from what has been said that most training of children in the realm of value disputes should have the purpose of helping them to become more skillful in clarifying issues, in verifying facts on which they believe their value judgments rest, in analyzing the soundness of the logic by which one value is based on another, and in examining the logical consistency among their values. This enormous task will keep us all busy for a long time to come, without bringing us to insoluble problems involving ultimate values. And one can only deny that this is the approach we should be taking by showing that ultimate values are encountered early rather than late in the process of tracing back the logical underpinning of everyday value disputes.

Let us take the hypothetical example of a sixth grade class discussing a particular issue about freedom of speech. Assume that, in the midst of an explosive social situation, the making of a scheduled political speech by a member of the opposition would involve a large risk of rioting and loss of life. Should the authorities prevent the speech?

A common approach, in the rare cases where this kind of material is discussed at all, is to earnestly ask the class what they think should be done. Should the sixth-graders' views on this subject be regarded as important, interesting, valid? No, no more than their views on the merits of Freudian psychology or the quantum theory. Can the teacher tell the children what the right answer is? Probably not, since her views may have not better factual and analytical basis than those of the children.

One way to begin to analyze the practical problem mentioned, where the value of life has to be weighed against the value of free speech, is to imagine what it would be like to abandon one of these values. If, for example, we abandoned freedom of speech as a value, what new institutions or system of rules would be required or possible to ensure a well-informed populace? What would be the logical consequences, for other values in our system, of abandoning the right to speak when speaking threatens life, limb, or property? What facts would be needed to assess the consequences of the change? How would it be decided whether to ban the speech? What redress for wrong decisions would exist?

The educational process suggested here has nothing to do with indoctination in its usual sense of an effort to instill particular values or viewpoints other than by rational proof. In some contexts, indeed, indoctrination is taken to mean the instilling of particular values plus a resistance to rational examination of those values; sound educational policy must explicitly condemn indoctrination in that sense.

A third and perverse definition of indoctrination is sometimes encountered, according to which any process that affects the values held by individuals is indoctrination. By the first definition, indoctrination is nonscientific, which does not necessarily make it a bad thing. By the second definition, indoctrination is anti-rational, and therefore a bad thing for those who value rationality, as educators must. By the third definition, indoctrination is neutral with regard to rationality and morality, which may or may not be flouted by such indoctrination. Unfortunately, the term is all too often used without analysis, as a pejorative term to discourage the application of scientific methods to the study of values, and it then becaomes a tool for irrational and immoral ends. Such use is irrational because it denies the use of rational methods to problems for which they are appropriate. It is immoral because it stands in the way of moral progress.

Our goal should be the straightforward development of cognitive skills for handling value disputes--not persuasion or indoctrination in the usual sense. Moral reasoning and the moral behavior it indicates should be taught and taught about, if for no other reason than that it is immoral to keep students ignorant of the empirical and logical bases behind the morality which is behind the law and the institutions which incorporate this country's virtues and permit its vices. But in addition to this intellectual payoff is the practical benefit to a society of possessing members who are skilled in making value judgments.

Such a society becomes a moral community, offering important benefits to all of its members.

Values in the Curriculum

Values in the curriculum should not be a wholly separate subject, but should have the status of a pervasive substructure, like critical thinking and clear expression. Value analysis work should begin in kindergarten and continue, with problems of increasing complexity, through high school. We can begin at what may be called the level of practicality in value analysis--the evaluation of products. Then, we might go on to the area of personal problems where questions arise about behavior that is wise or foolish, sensible or not. We can talk about good and bad behavior, meaning, at this "prudence level," good or bad for you. We can then progress to the area of social problems--morality in law and politics--and finally to the level of international problems, where we come to the root question of whether or not international conflict is a domain for morality, a domain where moral judgments other than prudential ones can be given sense or made to stick.

I think such a sequence suggests itself naturally, and presents many advantages. Even at the early level of the evaluation of consumer goods, there are rather sophisticated procedures and distinctions which will carry throughout the rest of the curriculum. But at that early stage, the basic moral problems do not yet need to be faced. As the student grows older and the subjects more complex, more practical ethical problems are introduced, in the course of teaching other things.

A Basis for a Moral System

As teachers and students push the logical analysis of values farther and farther, the question of ultimate values will arise more and more insistently and, eventually, perhaps even legitimately. If an ultimate value must be found, the best candidate for the position is "equality of rights." This is a value to which our schools and our nation are already politically committed, and thus has the great potential advantage of being reinforced by the prevailing mores. It is not open to criticism on the ground tha appeal to it in the public schools violates the separation of church and state. Equally important, "equality of rights" is a value upon which a whole system of morality can be built, a complete rational system based on this single premise.

There is not time here to spell out the moral system that can be based on equality of rights, but one can say that it is a system very like the humanist tradition of this country, as well as much of the Christian and Buddhist traditions. Neither is there time to describe the full meaning of equality of rights, although it is essentially embodied in the provisions of our constitution and our laws on voting and due process. While I do not object to giving "equality of rights" the temporary status of an ultimate value, a strong argument can be made for supporting this value on rational grounds, by appeal to probability, game theory and welfare considerations. As indicated earlier, it is still an open question whether any values are needed that go beyond that which is supportable by rational appeal to logical analysis.

Techniques

There are two dimensions to teaching how to handle values: the cognitive and the affective. We have been discussing mainly the cognitive side of values. In cognitive training, the methodology is that of the logician and the lawyer. In the analysis of legal systems, such questions arise as, What would be the conflicts if everyone followed this rule? What exceptions can be justified for this rule? and, What cases are subsumed under this general principle? Still other questions, the answers to which require factual materials from the social sciences, are, What would be the consequences of breaking this rule? What alternative rules might serve the same function? What is the significance of a particular custom to those who support it?

But there needs to be moral motivation as well as moral insight, which brings us to the affective side. The basic motivational training for a moral system based on equality of rights is closely connected with the training needed for understanding the positions and motives of other people. It requires seeing yourself in the other person's shoes and fostering of empathy and sympathy. Role-playing is appropriate in a great variety of historical, political and social situations. It encourages full use of materials available to support the role, and requires an active effort to understand the position of the person whose role is assumed; it is an excellent way to promote sympathy, and hence to promote moral behavior under the axiom of equal rights. Other techniques that will help to put the student into another's position are the use of graphic audio-visual materials, field experience, interviews and discussions.

Materials

With few exceptions, there should be no separate materials for value-training, just as there should be no separate subject matter. For the most part, materials should be multi-purpose. Some examples follow.

In elementary science, students could begin very early to evaluate the relative merits of instruments. They could, for example, construct their own balances, and discuss with each other the relative merits of criteria of sensitivity, capacity, cost and ease of use.

Another example is the use of materials from American constitutional law. Constitutional law embodies much of the nation's moral code. It represents an attempt to create a just or moral society, and its legal aspects give good training in the study of moral analysis. Since constitutional law also reflects much of a nation's history, it provides for moral analysis an ideal entree to the schools' history offerings.

Conclusion

We need an approach to values in the curriculum which is pedagogically more explicit than at present, but not necessarily handled explicitly in a separate part of the curriculum. We should train students to assess alternative arguments about values in a consistent and intelligent way, and to push the rational analysis of values as far back as they can. Seldom if ever should a discussion of values end with the conclusion that the view of the student--or of the teacher--is as good as anyone else's. A value judgment is as good as the reasons for it, and as weak as the reasons that support alternative views.

CHAPTER 15

ROUND TABLE: VALUES, MORALITY AND RATIONALITY

Understanding, Versus Commitment To, Others' Wants

Taba: I would like to get a little more clarification on the affective and cognitive sides of valuing. Let's take the example of putting yourself in another person's shoes. The playing out is one thing. You play out what you already have inside of you and feel. But there is also the question of the expansion of empathy. Does an increase in skills of argumentation cause an expansion of sensitivity? The materials you use for empathy have to be different from the materials used to develop cognitive skills. They have to bring new meanings or extend feelings in some way.

Scriven: I make your distinction between playing roles and increasing sensitivity very sharply. I want people to see that they have to do more than teach children the role-swapping technique. If they want children to behave morally, then they have to get them to sympathize with the other child whose role they adopt. They must feel the pains of the other child. This is where the distinction between indoctination and education is crucial. That is why it is of very great importance to me that we support the equal rights doctrine. Given an understanding of that doctrine, I can argue that if a child puts himself in another's shoes and understands what he wants and what his point of view is, he will come to a moral conclusion, a conclusion that will move him and change his behavior. And I think that we are entitled to put some pressure on him, as we do every day in every school in this country when we say, "How would you like it if Johnny took your pencil?" It is not as if we don't do it. We do it all the time. I am arguing that we ought to be honest about it, and that we are perfectly right in doing it.

However, you are quite right that understanding and a commitment to act are two quite different things. The extension of one's analytical capacity to see the point of view of others is one very important part of moral analysis. The second part, the extension of your motivational structure, means that you are moved by the other person's point of view. I agree that both are important, and that we ought to be prepared to develop both. Parents, of course, have much greater rights and obligations concerning moral training than do the school systems; they should see that they have to do better in such matters.

Shaver: In teaching empathy, the Harvard Project used a variety of materials, including what we called "empathy" materials. For example, the students in the suburban community where we taught didn't know much about slums. We found a very good movie, The Quiet One, which very graphically illustrates a Negro youngster's day in a slum. The purpose of the film was to emphasize what living conditions meant in the boy's life. Many students were shaken by the movie.

Defending One's Values

Shaver: There is another aspect that we have found extremely difficult to teach children: analysis of the discourse taking place. This analysis is extremely important for arriving at a rational decision. We asked our students to keep two questions in mind: (1) "What is my position, and how can I defend it?"; and (2) "What is going on in the discourse, and how can I analyze the intellectual process so that I know what is appropriate next?" One of the most crucial cognitive concepts to teach youngsters, for example, is the concept of relevance. They must be able to analyze the discourse and decide what is relevant at each point in the argument, if the argument is to be productive, that is, if their own position is to be clarified along with those of others.

We wanted the children to know that we were concerned about their opinions, because we wanted them to examine their own commitments, and to be able to support them. Our students were amazed when they discovered that we were really interested in what they believed, and that if they could support their position, we would accept it rather than insisting that they adopt our position. It is the process by which you arrive at a decision that is crucial. Different people using sound intellectual processes arrive at justifiable positions which are different.

We used two strategies in having the children take positions and defend them. One was to have a student take a position and defend it personally in a one-to-one confrontation with the teacher; the other was a type of dialogue, with a lower affective level. With the first style, the student was asked, "Do you think the police should have dragged the speaker off the podium?" "Why do you think that?" "What values support your position?" Using the second style, the teacher would ask, "What problems can you see with the action of the police?" "How do you think other people would react to this situation?" With this second style, no one student was forced to take a position and defend it. Issues were dealt with at what I call the societal, as opposed to the personal, level.

Our research on the use of the two methods showed the following: When we made an overall comparison of the two methods, there was no significant difference, as is so often the case in educational research. But when we categorized students on personality traits, we found that one type of student did better with the first style of teaching, and another type did better with the second style of teaching. These results are not only interesting in themselves; they also point to the possibility of much more fruitful educational research, through greater use of designs that show interaction effects.

Affective Impact of Value Questions

Sigel: An important problem here is that your project was getting highly involved in the affective life of the child. Irrespective of the academician's rational, analytical approach, these values have high affective valence for the child. Conflict is produced which can only be "resolved" by acceptance of the conflict--which is a very difficult thing for children, or for any of us, to do. There can be conflict of the child's beliefs with society's views, with his parents' views, and also with what the child perceives as the teacher's beliefs, no matter how neutral or supportive the teacher tries to be.

Such differences in viewpoints become very significant because we are now much more in the affective than the cognitive area. Regardless of the skills employed to solve the value problems, the content is highly emotional.

There are many out-of-school factors. Unless we are sensitive to them, and especially to possible school-home conflicts, we are discussing values in an ivory tower. If a child in the South goes home and says, "I learned in school that the I.Q.'s of Negroes are as high as whites," there may be real trouble for the child and for the teacher.

Shaver: You are right. We found that children are frequently punished rather than rewarded for thinking in ways that are original or independent. Exposure to our curriculum created a lot of problems at home, and we found it useful to give our students advice about "using reflective thinking judiciously," which meant, "Be cautious about challenging your parents' positions." A youngster is doing something that is quite reasonable but very upsetting to his parents when he tells his father that he doesn't have evidence for his position, or that there is another value that he is not considering, or that he should define his terms more carefully.

Scientific Versus Ethical Questions

Senesh: I would like to direct a question to Professor Scriven to clarify my own thinking. Suppose that I ask my class a question, and you ask your class a question. My question is, "What caused the unemployment during the Great Depression: the low level of economic activity, or the laziness of workers?" My reason for asking the question is that I know ahead of time that I have failed the student if he tries to prove to me that lazy workers caused the unemployment. Now, you ask your class, "What is more important, liberty or prosperity?" I pose this problem because you have indicated that there is hardly any difference between the two questions.

Scriven: The big difference between the two questions you have posed is not that one is in economics and the other in ethics. It is that the economics question is rather specific, while the ethics question is quite abstract. Suppose your question were, "What causes unemployment?" Then laziness and lack of demand are both plausible answers. The question, "What caused unemployment in the Great Depression?" is much more specific, and a specific answer is possible.

I am entitled to the same degree of specificity. I have an answer to the question, "Is liberty more important than property when somebody, by publishing an editorial which criticizes the government, finds that his newspaper is burned?" I think I have failed my student if he says that burning a newspaper is such a serious crime against property that we ought to censor the editor.

My point is that we cannot give students "right" answers to questions that are extremely complicated, or very abstract, or poorly specified. Our duty as teachers is to show them how to find the arguments on both sides of such questions, what they have to do to find additional relevant evidence, and what are the various values that must be considered.

Ends and Means

English: We seem to keep getting close to what has been the big headache for me in trying to develop a social science program and trying to help teachers teach it. I agree entirely with Professor Scriven that we have to introduce ethical discourse, rational criticism of values, into the whole school curriculum, including the social sciences. The real problem for a social science teacher is to show the youngster how, when his values are clear, he makes them take effect in society? What I am saying here is what Max Weber said long ago: the relation between the intent of a political action and its result is almost always paradoxical. What seems to be restraint, justice, correct action in a given situation, may actually cause more injustice. One of the dangers in teaching youngsters to argue purely in terms of rational values is that they may miss this kind of thing.

This is the old problem of means and ends. There are situations in which, if you use certain means, you won't get the ends that you were hoping for. This is something that the social scientist is up against all the time and should try to deal with in his classes.

Shaver: I disagree with your assessment of the danger. If I understand you correctly, you are talking about another very important element in the curriculum to be taught, in addition to rational analysis of values and policies. The question is, once you have decided on an appropriate policy, how do you ensure that it is implemented?

Scriven: I think that Dr. English is indicating a source of uneasiness about the tough line on values which I take, and that his question should be answered explicitly. It does not follow, from the conclusion that one knows how things ought to be arranged, that one should, therefore, set out singlemindedly to bring about such an arrangement. It is extremely important that, as part of ethical and value analysis, we consider reasoning such as this: "If we had a revolution, the resulting state of affairs would be incredibly better than the present state of affairs; but it isn't worth having a revolution to get the change, because the gain isn't as big as what we would lose in the revolution." I think the message illustrated here has got to be repeated many, many times. One must not think only in terms of ultimate goals, but also in terms of the cost of intermediate goals.

You must also take account of another point: "Don't strive for what is right if it is opposed by a large number of the people, even though they are wrong or probably wrong, if the gain is not greater than the cost of overriding what they want to do." This is a separate point. It isn't just that the course of bringing about this state of affairs may be so expensive that the ultimate gain is negative. But it is also the case that with respect to somebody's values which are indefensible, you may have to make a big allowance, not as if they were actually defensible, but very much of that magnitude.

Social Studies as a Vehicle for the Study of Values

McNee: I would like to hear more discussion on the whole question of the relation of the social sciences to the study of values. Let's grant that the study of social values, or values in general, must be a part of the curriculum. Let's grant also, as Professor Scriven has very well established, that there are advantages if the teaching of values is linked with the social sciences. What we haven't directed ourselves to at all is the opposite side of this coin, which is: "What are the pluses and minuses for the social sciences in having them taught in connection with values?" I don't think you can get anything free in this world. If you link the teaching of values with social sciences, perhaps you lose something by not linking it with, say, language arts.

We are bound too much by tradition. We all seem to be thinking that the social studies exist as an unchanging package in the schools, rather than thinking that there are certain things that we want to get across, and asking what are the various possible curricular arrangements that would yield the best results.

Shaver: The best way to arrange the social studies is an empirical question. But I don't think that the important question is what the social sciences tend to lose or gain. That is really irrelevant to general education. The important question is, what do the social sciences contribute, what can they contribute, to general education? We can't avoid the question of what we want to do with general education. We must ask ourselves, "Is it part of the general education program to train social scientists--to induct students into the social sciences?" We also have to ask if it is part of the general education program to induct students into carpentry, and into deep sea fishing. I do not think that general education owes anything to the social sciences.

McNee: You are willing to be the rider, but not the horse. You want to teach values, or teach about values, and you are willing to use the social studies if that suits your purposes. But you are not willing to have the social studies people use values to suit their convenience.

Shaver: No. I am saying that the social sciences are an important ingredient of a general education program aimed at teaching children to analyze public issues. The social sciences have a lot to contribute in the way of information about an issue and the context of the issue. Social science also has a lot to contribute in methodology--hypothesis-testing, the historian's concern with the validity of documents, and the like.

Whether the student learns to use these concepts or intellectual strategies and to apply them to public issues best in the context of a course based on the structure of geography or some other social science, or in a course that I might organize to deal with important public issues and bring in social science concepts as they seemed relevant, we don't really know. We did find out in the Harvard Project that over a two-year period when our students put in only about one-third of the usual time on a U.S. history course, their learning of U.S. history and political science did not suffer. As a matter of fact, when we looked at items testing knowledge that was part of a history course and also relevant to our problem units, such as racial segregation in the South and problems arising from the growth of labor unions, we found that our students learned more history than students in a regular history course. This experience indicates to me that there is doubt that basing courses on the individual social sciences is the best approach for general education.

Morrissett: Professor Scriven, you seemed to accept the idea that the social studies curriculum is a proper place for value judgments. Would you care to comment further?

Scriven: You have to distinguish two types of value judgments, non-moral and moral. Elementary science study is one of the places where it should be stressed that the empirical sciences are also involved in evaluational activities--the evaluation of instruments, descriptions, theories, hypotheses, predictions, accuracy, and so on. All of this is part of the activity of the scientist, whatever field he is in. So, evaluating goes through the whole structure of education, whether it is physical, biological, language arts, or whatever. But I want students to see that moral value analysis has little relevance until you get to the place where more than one human being is involved. That is what morality is about. Moral judgments naturally come into social sciences more than into other subjects because the social sciences deal with relationships among people.

Morality and Rationality

Morrissett: Professor Feigl, do you have a comment?

Fiegl: I am still a little confused as to whether we are talking about the same thing when we talk about values in the social studies curriculum. So, I want to repeat for emphasis something Professor Shaver has said already very clearly. Namely, it is one thing to study evaluations--and clearly the social studies and social sciences are full of such studies--but it is another thing to inculcate values. I am not saying indoctrinate, but rather to impart some value attitudes, to mold the evaluational attitudes of those to be educated. This can be done in a variety of ways. It can be done in a physics laboratory by showing that it is unfair to use an instrument that another person has just prepared for an important experiment. There is an ethical issue there. In any kind of context, moral questions can come up.

Now, I whole-heartedly agree with Professor Scriven that we should carry rationality to the limit, but we should first lay our motivations frankly on the table. We are both humanistically inclined. This is only a label, but you probably understand what I mean. We feel that in this day and age of science, the fundamental basis of value judgments, moral value judgments, should not come from the supernatural, should not come from a theologically framed religion, but from somewhere in human nature. This is a very rough and inadequate formulation. But both of us believe that moral value judgments should be rational.

However, Professor Scriven and I are also very much interested in the analysis of meanings of terms, and he knows as well as I do that the term "rational" and the noun "rationality" cover a multitude, not of sins, but of virtues. To speak the language that we both understand and appreciate, like the language of Ludwig Wittgenstein, there are family resemblances, not necessarily strict common denominators, among the various meanings of a given word, such as the word rational. I will list only a few of these meanings.

(1) We say that a person is thinking in a rational way if his performance is in accord with the norms of deductive logic: consistency and conclusiveness of reason is one virtue.

(2) A person could be quite consistent and conclusive in his deductive reasoning and be quite irrational with respect to inductive logic. In other words, he does not learn the lessons of experience; he does not make the proper generalizations, or inductions.

(3) We call a person irrational if he uses the wrong means toward the end that he has in view. If I take a pound of butter in order to pound a nail into the wall, you will say, "Feigl must be crazy." It is not a very good way to hammer a nail into a board.

(4) Professor Scriven also pointed out that we must consider the cost of the means, and not just the financial cost. There are all kinds of burdens that we impose upon ourselves in order to reach certain ends, and if someone does this in a very inappropriate way--if he uses means that are much more costly, not in financial terms only--then we call that irrational. On the other hand, a very effective use of means, a very parsimonious choice of means, is another meaning of rationality.

(5) Finally there is ethical rationality. If you conceive it roughly along Kantian lines, it seems to be rational to allot equal rights to everybody; it has a certain flavor of rationality. I agree that there is a family resemblance, but no more than a family resemblance, between the previous concepts of rationality and the concept of moral rationality that includes the norms of fairness, justice, and equality of opportunity for all. But it is a different thing.

My major question to Professor Scriven is: Is not the norm of equality itself a matter of commitment rather than something that we can justify empirically? If we do justify this norm empirically and say that it, too, can be regarded as a means to another end, namely, a happy and harmonious society, then we can immediately repeat the question, Is this end morally right?

Berlak: I would like to add another question, because I think Professor Scriven can handle them both at the same time. What is the role of empiricism in morality, and how is empiricism related to rationality?

Scriven: First let me speak to the argument of Professor Feigl that you must distinguish the study of people's values from indoctrination. He agrees with this distinction, but doesn't quite see that what I am talking about is something different. I am talking about training people to make the evaluations right; and I am saying two things about such training. One, we do it all the time, and we know very well we can do it properly; yet, we conceal from ourselves the fact that we do it. We do it with respect to teaching how to do good, how to give good answers to examination questions, and how to distinguish a good from a bad account of the causes of the American Revolution. We do it when we are talking about whether or not this microscope is a good microscope by comparison with that one.

The instances I have mentioned are all cases where the fight about the criteria is not the big fight in terms of Professor Shaver's illustrations. But that doesn't matter; it is still valuing, evaluating. It is still the activity of making value judgments in the straightforward sense that you come up saying that something is good, better, worse, bad, and so on. We should be explicit and honest about this. We also should push it as hard as we can and be willing to move it into the social sphere and talk about the superiority of a particular form of government in a particular time and place. We should be willing to say, for example, that trying to run a medieval system in the situation described in the E.S.I.

unit was a mistake. It was not the best system for those people at that time, and we can show why it was not.

Feigl: But you have some norms up your sleeve.

Scriven: I have no norms up my sleeve. I have up my sleeve the fact that I have studied these people enough to see what in fact they wanted. It is not a norm; it's a fact about them.

Professor Feigl's comment brings us to the second point--his concern about the ultimate values to which I am appealing implicitly. First of all, I think rationality is not a concept with multiple meanings at all, but a cluster concept with multiple strands. That is quite different. Each of the things which Professor Feigl mentioned is a very important factor in determining somebody's rationality. One of them is not determinant; that is, a person might slip on one of the types of rationality, but if he holds up on all the others you will still judge him to be a pretty rational person. So, none of the particular types of rationality is a necessary condition, but the sum of them is a sufficient condition for being rational.

Moral rationality, Professor Feigl's fifth category, seems to me independent of the others until it is shown to be dependent on them. I do not take moral justice or fairness to be a criterion of rationality until a demonstration is given that it is irrational for people not to be just or fair. That demonstration requires proof that the axiom of equality is in fact not the preferred axiom for the distribution of interpersonal consideration in society. That axiom has got to be made to stick.

I make the axiom of equality stick in a straightforward way. Imagine a group of people with different though somewhat overlapping concerns, ultimate values in Professor Feigl's sense, needs and wants in my sense. There are various ways in which these people individually may act with respect to the others. They may give the others no direct consideration at all, concerning themselves with others' welfare only insofar as it is instrumental to their own good. Or, their behavior might be anywhere on the spectrum up to complete altruism in which the slightest whim of another is a ground for them to kill themselves. Can we say anything about the empirical results of adoption of these various attitudes toward others? This is the key element in morality. I argue on analytic grounds that, in fact, the equality axiom gives the optimal solution. It is optimal in every situation in which your power to enforce your desires is not greater than the combined force of all others who might band together against you. This condition has held throughout the history of every society whose members have even the slightest education. That is the argument.

Two comments should be made about this argument. First, it does not beg any moral questions. I am not saying this is the best form of morality because of some previous moral commitment. I am saying that because you are hungry, and because you want to socialize, because you want shelter over your head, there is a practical problem in front of you. Out of that practical problem, we generate the system of allocation of consideration which is morality. There is no presupposition of morality.

Second, the question arises of what we should do with the argument in the school system. I say that whether or not you agree with my arguments for the superiority of that axiom, you are not allowed to teach in the school system if you do not accept them. Ours is the school system of a democracy which is committed to the equality axiom in just the sense that I have stated. This is the sense that is embodied in our constitutional law, and is a basis for the morality system. Thus, I have supported the argument on both theoretical and practical grounds.

A final point, in response to Professor Berlak's question: it seems to me that the notion of rationality includes empiricism. When we say that somebody is rational in the ordinary sense, we include empiricism. In the same ordinary sense, I am saying that the support for morality is empirical, that the support comes from objective, observable facts. And it is the social sciences which give us the data for solving the empirical aspect of moral disputes.

That is why social sciences are peculiarly relevant to moral judgments.

Rational Arguments for Ultimate Commitments

Feigl: I want to reply to Professor Scriven by saying that one man's whim is another man's profound moral insight. The majority is not necessarily right. If you look at what little we know about the development of moral codes throughout the history of mankind, you find some genuine innovations. I am disregarding now the theological aspects, such as matters connected with after-life and relations to the supernatural, and thinking only of moral attitudes and behavior: love thy neighbor, and even thine enemy. The Romans, the great stoics, even Aristotle himself, had absolutely no taste for that. So, this was an innovation.

Can we give rational arguments for these ultimate commitments, such as love thy neighbor and the principle of equality? I maintain that the cultural anthropologists of the last century confused mores with morality. Proof that folkways are different in different places on earth requires only a trip around the world. That is obvious and trivial. What is perhaps not quite so obvious is that there is a convergence in the moral ideals, in the norms, of mankind. Despite the horrible violations of these norms, as in recent history, these standards come more and more to the fore in humanity at large. Perhaps I am overly optimistic on this, but I do think that certain principles of morality emerge, as in our civil rights program and our growing objections to war.

There are moral commitments in back of these convictions about social issues. But I do not think that we can justify them as means to further ends. You come to the end of the rope somewhere, in a logical reconstruction of any kind of dispute concerning what ought to be done.

Scriven: You come to the end, but the end is not a secret ultimate value. It is needs and wants. It is the facts of life. It is the fact that you have got to solve the problems of social living if you intend to continue to live, not because you are saying that life is good, but because you are saying that you want to live.

Shaver: That is a value judgment.

Scriven: Of course it is a value judgment, but not a moral value judgment.

Shaver: Yes, it is an ultimate commitment.

Scriven: It is not a moral value judgment. We are talking about where the moral ultimate comes from. It is not a moral source. Of course, it is an ultimate commitment. That is what gives the driving force to search for the moral solution. There is no question about that. Reason, as Hume said, is the slave of the passions. If you don't have interests, you are not going to be concerned with logic. The fact that you have interests, that you want to live, is a fact. It is not a value judgment. It is a fact.

Feigl: But it doesn't settle moral issues.

Scriven: The desire to live does not settle moral issues. It generates the problem from which you construct the system of laws and morality which does settle moral issues, and which creates the concept of morality. In precisely the same way, an interest in games creates the game of chess, for which the phrase good move is then defined.

Shaver: We wouldn't necessarily all conclude that life is good.

Scriven: Not in the least. The remark that life is good strikes me as vacuous. I don't think it is either good or bad; it just is. But killing people wantonly is bad.

Shaver: Why?

Scriven: Because that is something you can evaluate in the framework of rules and norms which can be defended rationally in the situation where it is a known fact that people want to live. You do not have to come up with a conclusion that eating is good or that life is good. That is the power which drives the system to live.

CHAPTER 16

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Herbert Feigl
Michael Scriven
Lawrence Senesh

Herbert Feigl

I want to add a few remarks on the value problems that have been discussed. There seems to be agreement that the school as well as the home has some responsibility for moral education. Since this is so, we should be clear on the philosophical basis for the inculcation of fundamental norms.

I still hold to my previous opinion, which differs from Professor Scriven's. There are ultimate values, which cannot be justified by appealing to logical consistency, deductive reasoning, or empirical research. When there is divergence in judgments, based on ultimate values, there are four possible procedures to settle the differences: (1) coercion--sometimes requiring violence, which I abhor; (2) persuasion; (3) compromise; and (4) higher synthesis.

We can illustrate these methods with an example of two fellows who want to go out for an evening. One wants to go to a burlesque show, the other to a James Bond movie. The issue is not important enough to suggest coercion. One may be able to persuade the other to his point of view. They may compromise by going to both shows in succession. Or they may decide on a higher synthesis, by going to the symphony! In international matters, the alternative to coercion may be found in a higher synthesis, in which national sovereignty is abandoned and a world state based on world law is created.

I am optimistic enough to believe that through the experience of living together on this planet, we are slowly approaching some sort of common denominator in our basic moral norms, such as: do not do harm to your neighbor; love thy neighbor; be kind, helpful, fair, just; and try to achieve certain personal perfections. Of course every one of these terms is open to persuasive definition. My viewpoint is that of a scientific humanist, which seems to me to be a proper solution for our age of science.

Michael Scriven

A fallacy that seems to be commomplace in curriculum structuring is the imposition of logically sound categories on curricula without investigating the question of their pedagogical utility. The field of critical thinking gives one of many examples. There are logical distinctions of great importance between hypotheses and observations. But it is not worth structuring curriculum in terms of these logical distinctions unless they have, not just teachability, but value in teaching. They must contribute to increasing enlightenment.

There is no evidence that, because things are perfectly clear to a teacher or curriculum maker, it pays to make them clear to the student. I looked at a sociology curriculum recently and came to the following conclusions. It teaches a vocabulary, but the net intellectual gain from it is indistinguishable from zero. If you want to talk to sociologists then it is splendid: you can talk to sociologists. If that is the value you are aiming at, it has a value. But we are supposed to be talking about other kinds of values: insight, the capacity to explain, the capacity to predict, and the capacity to classify and describe more efficiently than we could before. If these are the criteria, vocabulary itself does not contribute toward meeting these criteria.

It is not that one can easily say what classifications give one intellectual insight. The history of psychoanalysis is the history of a fight about this kind of question: Is psycholanalysis a re-description of old phenomena or is it a genuinely new and explanatory theory?

None of us ought to go very far with curriculum work without getting one of our worst enemies in as an evaluator. We must give him money to tear our curriculum to pieces. We must listen to somebody who says, "What you are doing is teaching them a new way of talking about the same old things, and at the end, they won't know a thing more, except a new way of talking about it."

There is another general point to be made about attempts to produce conceptual reforms of the curriculum. There is a tendency to go looking for concepts to hang everything on, the "fundamental concepts" of the discipline, and then to hang everything on them. Nothing is more boring than doctoring elementary material so that it will hang on the same coat rack as Ph. D. theses. The kids are bored by it, I am bored by it, the teachers are bored by it. Of course, it looks neater. We have restructured experience in terms of $9\frac{1}{2}$ basic concepts; but that is not really what we are after. We are trying to increase the extent to which children understand those aspects of their experience which they did not understand before. Understanding is not just describing.

There is no clear empirical evidence that giving highly organized structures of knowledge to the children is really going to be the best use of our time and theirs. It may be that it is much better to spend a very little time giving them hints about the overall organization, and to let the full picture come alive as a by product to discussing in low-level terms many specific cases that they find interesting and challenging.

Another matter that has come up in the conference is the defense I gave in the Ford and Pugno book for teaching geography and history early in the schools, which is quite the opposite of Professor Senesh's approach of using the other social sciences in the elementary grades. My reason for suggesting this sequence is that the theories of sociology, economics, anthropology and political science are so very weak, as compared with the validity of the data available to them, that it would be a fatal disservice to education not to communicate the data and it is this which comprises history and geography.

In our discussion of cooperative work among the disciplines, in the Consortium, I have talked of a multi-disciplinary approach, rather than an interdisciplinary approach. The notion of an ultimate synthesis of the social sciences is a dangerous myth, and an educationally vacuous myth, at the moment. There could be an ideal setting in which we can synthesize social sciences and produce something pedagogically valuable. Right now that is not true, but each of the social sciences has an enormously important contribution to make. The children will understand this better if they see the social sciences as autonomous subjects. I agree with Professor Senesh in this respect. We should not try to blend the social sciences until we know much more than we do now.

Lawrence Senesh

In making concluding remarks about the conference, I will confess at the beginning that I consider this an opportunity to sneak in some ideas of my own that have not been brought out sufficiently in the conference.

One very important point should be emphasized, because it has such a far-reaching implication. It is that the child lives in a real world where he is exposed to all kinds of experiences. The home environment is sometimes one of brutal social realities. Television brings the outside world into the home. Modern communications and the child's own experience bring poverty, violence, discrimination, traffic accidents, authority or lack of it, within the view of the child. Unfortunately we cannot tell life: "Please wait until the child is ready for these experiences." The child's mind is overwhelmed by social realities. It is our job to help children discover a design that underlies the chaos of events.

I do not agree with those who say that ideas and theories are more complex than experiences. When a child asks questions, he is seeking orderliness, a simplification of facts -- which is what theory is.

Theory is the ordering device for life itself; and life is the curriculum, not economics or political science or sociology. But in order to understand life, we have to use the individual social sciences, for the sole reason that there is no unified social science theory yet. That is the reason I see no sense in teaching social studies, which consist of generalizations of such a high level that they are not useful in problem-solving situations.

Earlier in the conference, we discussed the relationship of knowledge to behavior, attitudes and skills. I became more convinced than ever that it is through the use of the analytical tools of knowledge that we get the desired changes in behavior, attitudes, and skills.

Professor Sigel described in his speech, quite correctly, the many obstacles in the way of communication between the theoretician and the child. I hope that his speech was not meant to discourage us, but rather intended to irritate and stimulate us to more innovation. The difficulties must be overcome, and we must learn how to establish a meaningful relationship between the child's experience and the body of theoretical knowledge.

The conference has probably opened up more questions than it has answered, and I will mention those that seem most important.

(1) A question raised by Professor Taba a number of times, as well as by others, is: "How can this dialogue among specialists such as those gathered at

this conference be continued so that some useful synthesis of their knowledge, interests, and efforts will emerge?"

(2) How can we best encourage progress in evaluation methods, so that we know whether the innovations into which we put so much effort are right?

(3) How do we know whether the "market" is ready for new curriculum ideas? If the market is not ready, should we put the new ideas in mothballs until it is ready? Or should we do as most business firms would do: advertise and create a need for the new product?

(4) How can we establish good working relationships between the people who are primarily responsible for teacher training and those who work on curriculum innovation? This question has come up again and again; there have been many sparks, indicating continuing conflict. I don't know how serious the conflict is, but we should think very hard about how to bring about cooperation between these groups.

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1. G. W. Ford and Lawrence Pugno, The Structure of Knowledge and the Curriculum (Rand Mc Nally & Company, 1964), 87-105.